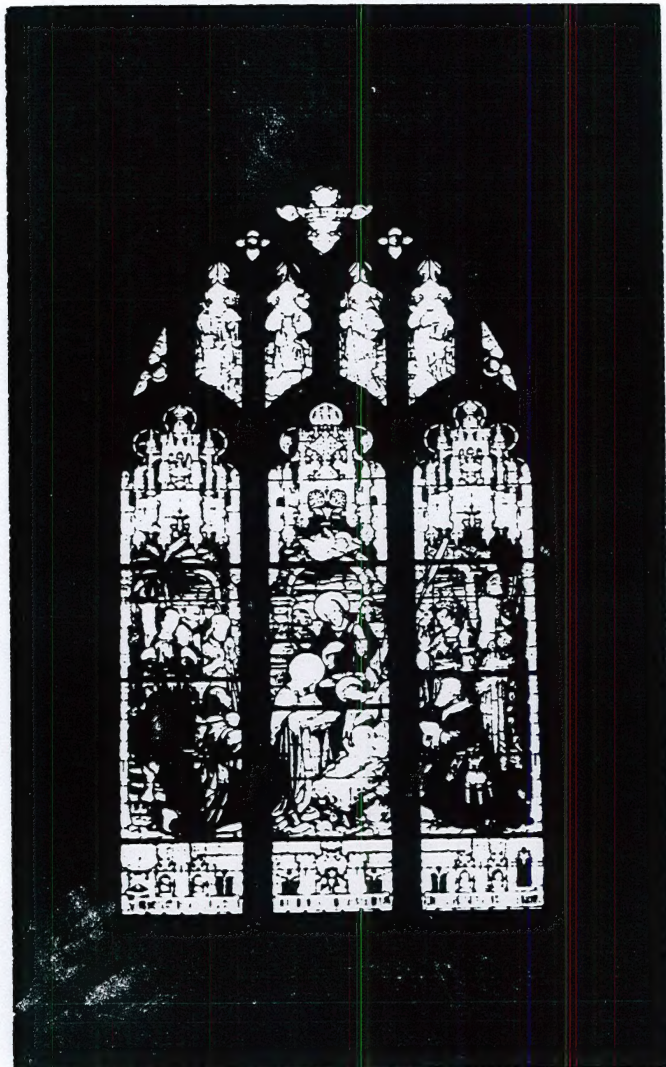




# Witness to Grace

The History of Grace Church Mt. Airy  
1857 – 1988





"Our thought of God determines what kind of worship we offer him. St. Peter declares him to be the God of all grace, and we recognize it as the language of experience and repentance. The Church has narrowed the message of God's grace. She ever stands bidding men out to touch the hand of the Incarnation. Each church building becomes a witness to grace."

*The Rt. Rev. Dr. Whitehead, Bishop of Pittsburgh, in his sermon at the consecration of Grace Church, November 13, 1889*

To write a history of a church one must first decide what meaning of the word to use. The dictionary says a church is a building, a place of worship. It also defines it as a body of believers. The *Book of Common Prayer* says in the Catechism "The Church is the community of the New Covenant." The Rev. Craig Eder, son of former Rector Charles Eder, wrote in a 1987 letter, "much of the life of the church is profoundly significant yet would not make good historical reading. Birth, confirmation, marriage, death, great joy, deep sorrow—all are part of the life of the church. This history contains what is left. It highlights the building of the church and subsequent alterations and additions. It tells the stories of the people who have invested so much of themselves to make this parish possible, and the events surrounding them.

At times a name will be mentioned because that person has been a part of something of historical significance. This should in no way detract from the tribute owed so many down through the ages. There have been those who have inspired our worship—clergy, lay readers, altar guild members, acolytes, organists, choir members, ushers. There have been countless numbers of church school teachers making possible the regeneration of the church through Christian education. Many parishioners have dealt with money—raising it, keeping track of it, dispersing it, and of course donating it. Others have cooked, sewn, cleaned, acted, delivered flowers, provided solace, taken care of the property. How many have attended meetings, taken minutes, written notices and articles? The list is without end, this unnamed procession of souls giving unselfishly to further Grace Church and the Kingdom of God on earth.

The bulk of the research for this history was done in the Vestry minutes, copies of the *Parish News*, church documents, letters from and interviews with members past and present. It was made possible by the following people who helped plan, conducted interviews and research, provided moral support: John Allison, Geoffrey Tattersfield, Earl and Irene Williams, Mary Taylor, Donald Putney, Dorothy and Harry Taylor, Derrick Rivers, Russell and Nicholas Mahrt, Roderick Sealy, Derek Washington, Mercer Tate of Summit Presbyterian Church, and Jamie Duffin of the Germantown Historical Society. Special thanks go to editors Susan Snyder and the Reverend Marjorie Farmer (Susan is responsible for the cover photographs), and to production manager Carol Faris.

Anne Snyder

June 1988



## CHRONOLOGY

September 6, 1857	Christ Church, Germantown, establishes a mission in a room on the second story of a fire house.
October 4, 1857	Mission transfers to parlor of "Steamboat House."
September 18, 1858	Corner stone laid for new church on Mt. Airy Avenue then called Willow Grove Turnpike).
March 12, 1859	Charter given new church by the Justices of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court.
May, 1859	Building consecrated by Bishop Bowman. Deacon Harry Smith in charge of the church under the direction of the Reverend Adkins of Christ Church.
1860	The Reverend Mr. Nutt, the Reverend Charles Hale, the Reverend Thomas Yocum serve as Rectors in rapid succession.
November 16, 1864	Enlarged church consecrated by Bishop Potter.
October 1, 1865	The Reverend Alexander Shiras becomes Rector.
May 1, 1866	The Reverend Edward Hale becomes Rector.
August 12, 1866	The Reverend R. A. Edward becomes Rector.
March 14, 1874	The Reverend G. A. Redles becomes Rector.
June, 1875	The Reverend Simeon Hill becomes Rector.
February, 1888	Women's Guild organized.
June 13, 1888	Ground broken for new church at Gowen Avenue and Ardleigh Street.
September 18, 1888	Corner stone is laid.
November 13, 1889	Church is consecrated by Bishop Whitaker.
1890	Parish house and rectory are erected.
1909	Rood screen added to the church.
1909	George Alexander West becomes organist/choirmaster.



July 16, 1912	The Reverend Simeon Hill resigns. (He died October 13.)
March 1, 1913	The Reverend Thomas Sparks Cline becomes Rector.
1914	Robert MacDonald, Sr., starts the first Boy Scout troop.
October 5, 1914	Organizational meeting of Young Churchman's Association, the forerunner of the Men's Club.
1916	Land behind church and parish house purchased.
May, 1917	Vestry grants Mr. Cline's request to serve as chaplain with our armed forces in Europe, he returns in May, 1919.
September, 1921	New Skinner organ installed.
March 7, 1922	Newell Robinson is engaged as organist.
September 30, 1924	The Reverend Thomas Cline resigns.
January, 1925	The Reverend Charles E. Eder becomes Rector.
May 8, 1928	Electric lights are installed in the parish house.
November, 1933	The North Porch is dedicated.
February 15, 1937	The Reverend Charles Eder receives honorary Doctor of Divinity degree at Temple University.
January, 1943	Heating system converted from oil to coal by order of the Office of Price Administration (reconverted in 1946).
November 30, 1946	Dedication of the chapel.
1948	Basement under the parish house excavated and the Memorial Room installed.
May, 1955	Electronic chimes installed.
1958	The Reverend Charles Eder announces his retirement at the end of the year.
May 6, 1959	The Reverend Richard K. Bauder becomes Rector.
September, 1959	Apeldorn property on Sprague Street purchased for new rectory.
December 1, 1961	New organ console installed.



May 27, 1962	Ground breaking for the new parish house.
May 26, 1963	Dedication of the new parish house by Bishop Oliver J. Hart.
November, 1963	Roderick and Frances Ragland, with daughters Karen and Nina, become the first black family to join the church.
May 25, 1969	Mortgage for new parish house burned on the stage in Cline Auditorium.
November, 1969	Dedication of chapel pews in memory of Guy and Elva Apeldorn.
February 1, 1970	Anne Snyder is elected first woman member of the Vestry.
May, 1970	The Reverend Roger Pickering is given the use of space on the second floor for All Soul's Mission to the Deaf.
October, 1971	The women's groups are reorganized under one heading, The Women of Grace Church, but consisting of five guilds.
April 16, 1972	Celebration of Newell Robinson's fifty years of service to the church.
September 1972	John Clapham and Edward Doelp become the first laymen to administer the chalice.
November, 1975	Dedication of needlepoint kneelers made by a group of women in the church under the direction of Diana Blay.
February, 1977	Carol Farls becomes first woman to be appointed Rector's Warden.
December 12, 1978	Dinner held to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Rector's ordination to the priesthood.
September 22, 1980	Newell Robinson resigns as organist. (Dies December 2, 1984)
March 27, 1982	The Women of Grace Church open thrift shop.
July, 1986	Nativity window becomes the last to be cleaned and sealed, ending a five-year project.
May 9, 1988	Marjorie Farmer is ordained a priest of the church in a service held in Grace Church, Mt. Airy.



Philadelphia was the second largest city in the country in 1857 and probably the fourth largest in the world, the Consolidation Act of 1854 having incorporated the area's many townships and boroughs into one. Chestnut Street was the hub with its offices, museums, hotels, theaters, stores, and the first skyscraper in Philadelphia. The University of Pennsylvania, Jefferson Medical College, and other institutions of higher learning were well established. The Delaware River bustled with activity, both shipping and the building of ships. Far more tranquil was the scene along the Schuylkill. Pleasure-seekers were attracted by its recreational possibilities such as boating and ice-skating, its sylvan beauty, and even the sculptures of West Laurel Hill Cemetery.

Slightly away from center city, factories abounded producing all manner of goods. Snug red brick row houses for the workers sprang up around the industrial areas of Bridesburg, Frankford, and Manayunk. Residential sections along North Broad Street with their large townhouses could be described as fashionable. Others such as Southwark and Moyamensing were slums. But in Mt. Airy mansions were being built. It also had its share of the fifteen hundred farms that still existed within the city limits, along with the vacation retreats owned by urban dwellers. Fields, woods, streams, country air were this lovely neighborhood's components.

Addison B. Atkins was Rector of Christ Church, Germantown. A man in his mid-thirties, well received by his congregation, he was eager to spread the work of the church throughout the community. Of particular concern were the Christian education needs of the children. Because travel by horse and buggy over dirt roads was difficult and time-consuming, and the population was growing, Atkins submitted to his vestry plans for two missions, one to be in Germantown, the other in Mt. Airy. First came St. Michael's on High Street, but this mission met with numerous impediments, including five fires, and eventually rejoined Christ Church.

The second venture started on September 6th, 1857, as a Sunday School in a room over the fire station on Miller Street (later Gowen Avenue). Harry Smith, a candidate for Holy Orders, was superintendent, and teaching was done by six or seven volunteers from Christ Church. The room was soon thought to be too small and another location was found just one month later. This time it was a place known as the "Steamboat House," so called because the deck of a steamboat complete with berths and other accoutrements had been built on its flat roof, the owner having been a steamboat captain. An afternoon service with sermon was added and was well attended. With such success, the Rector and some other interested gentlemen felt the time was ripe for a new church. Michael Baker, Esq., donated land on Mt. Airy Avenue (then a toll road known as Willow Grove Turnpike). Ten vestry members were elected, a committee was appointed to procure a charter, and another committee was formed to get the approval of the Rector and Vestry of St. Paul's, Chestnut Hill. The ladies of Christ Church held a fair in Town Hall between December 18 and 25 to raise money. And so in the year that the failure of the Bank of Pennsylvania



touched off a financial panic that swept the nation, the Academy of Music made its debut, and the cornerstone was laid for Holy Trinity Church in Philadelphia, Grace Church began.

The name first chosen was "The Church of the Messiah." A simple building was planned, just one large all-purpose room, estimated cost to be between \$1,500 and \$1,800. The cornerstone was laid on Saturday afternoon, September 18, 1858. Then at the October Vestry meeting the name was changed to Grace Church and a more artistic chapel planned. The charter was adopted. Subscriptions were reported amounting to \$900, and the ladies' fair had netted an impressive \$1,000. The first Sunday School classes were held in the new building in April 1859. Mr. Smith had been ordained deacon by this time, continuing to serve under Mr. Atkins' direction. Much of the credit for the success of the church was due to Mr. Smith and his winning ways.

Consecration was on the first Sunday in May 1859 by Bishop Bowman; the sermon was preached by the Reverend Dr. Pratt of Philadelphia. Wrote the



*The church on Mt. Airy Avenue*



Reverend James Hart Lamb in his historical sermon of November 1914, "The clergy robed in the house of Mr. Shermer at the corner of Main Street and Mt. Airy Avenue. It was a novel sight in Mt. Airy to see the white-robed clergy marching to the church."

By 1860, the first horse-drawn streetcar, adorned with flowers and flags, had arrived in Mt. Airy. This and the six-year-old Reading Railroad line brought numerous changes. With public transportation available, many vacation homes were converted to year-round residences, and other houses were built. Elizabeth Schaeffer had recently founded the orphanage on Germantown Avenue that was later turned over to Pennsylvania's Lutheran ministerium. Johnson's Hall was a large recreation center where dances were held and entertainment provided by the likes of Signor Antonio Britz and his trained canaries. In 1861 the Civil War started and Philadelphia became a city of war. There were weapons produced, warships built, uniforms made; and legions of troops passed through. Hospitals to care for the wounded sprang up, including the four-thousand-bed Mower Hospital across from what is now the Wyndmoor railroad station.

The Vestry of Grace Church seemed to be mired in administrative concerns, and the records of this period show no indication of the war's existence. (It is worth noting that the national Episcopal Church had taken no stand on the conflict.) First of the worries was the procession of clergy. Following Mr. Smith was the Reverend Mr. Nutt who worked hard but lived but a short time. Next was the Reverend Charles R. Hale, followed by the Reverend Thomas Yocum. These gentlemen were assisted by George W. Elkins who as layreader held services in the absence of the clergy. Other vestry concerns were the needs of the growing church. The original chapel would no longer suffice and plans for enlargement were made. At first the addition of an "Infant Room" seemed a good idea, but on further thought it was decided that any addition should be constructed so as to enlarge the church. The work began in the Spring of 1864. Services and church school continued in the building which was closed off at the end by a rough board. (Shades of a later era!) Work was finished by Fall and the building consecrated in November by Bishop Potter.

The frequent clergy "changing of the guard" was not over yet. Mr. Yokum resigned, and four gentlemen were nominated in rapid succession to be rector. All four declined. Finally Dr. Alexander Shiras accepted the call and entered his duties in October 1865, only to resign in February 1866. He was followed by the Reverend Edward Hale who lasted but three months. Such were the growing pains of the young parish. Despite the unsettled nature of things, it was at this point that the church became self-sustaining. The Vestry of Christ Church had until that time been donating at least \$300 a year and were prepared to continue if necessary.

On August 12, 1866, the Reverend R. A. Edward was elected Rector and remained for a record eight years. The church prospered under his ministrations. Indeed this was a time for church building and enthusiasm



throughout the country. More pews were put in and money was raised to buy a melodium (defined by Webster as a small reed organ in which suction bellows draw air inward through reeds).

A discussion of the 1860s would not be complete without mention of three other significant events. First, in 1863 Charles M. Bayard was elected to the Vestry and proceeded to serve for the next forty-eight years. Second was another significant election to the Vestry, that of Franklin Benjamin Gowen. Son of Irish immigrant James Gowen, he was to attain such stature in his career as to be included in *Who Was Who in America*. A bronze plaque at the back of the church memorializes this family and its liberality. More about the Gowens later. And third, and certainly not least, a committee was appointed to supervise the erection of an outhouse. ("Ah, those were rigorous times," wrote Guy Apeldorn.)

#### **The Reverend Simeon C. Hill**

On February 24, 1874, a call was sent to the Reverend Simeon Hill, which he declined. The Reverend G. A. Redles was elected in March, but in February of the following year, in a somewhat astonishing move, he defected to the Reformed Episcopal Church. And, to make matters worse, some of the most dedicated and influential parishioners went with him. Disenchantment with the correctness of the liturgies and dogmas were the reasons given. Again Simeon Hill was called, and this time he accepted, ending the era of frequent rector turnover, for he was to remain for thirty-seven years.

1876 was the year of the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia, a celebration modestly described as the greatest, grandest, most extensive, most inclusive and splendid, and most hospitable fair ever held. By this time Grace Church was encountering some financial difficulties. The building of a rectory and accompanying expenses had strained the budget. And then in 1877 there was a complaint voiced at a Vestry meeting that was to echo down the ensuing decades—there were problems with the roof! Two separate requests for funds were made over and above the pew rents already charged. Irrksome as that must have been, the congregation rose to the appeal as they always had before and were to do ever after. In 1879, in what would seem to be the ultimate in economy measures, the Rector served as both rector and organist for six months. Three years later Mrs. Hill served as organist, donating her salary towards organ repairs.

The church flourished in the eighties to the point that it was described in a 1883 newspaper article as being the catalyst for the whole area. In 1883 the Mt. Airy station of the Reading Railroad was built and Gowen Avenue was paved, contributing to further expansion of the community. It became obvious by 1887 that a new larger church was needed and once again offers of property were forthcoming. 1) Mrs. Borthwick offered two lots on Main Street below Sedgwick; 2) James E. Gowen offered a lot on the corner of Main Street and Gowen Avenue; and 3) Franklin Gowen offered, from the estate of his recently deceased father, two lots on Gowen Avenue and Ardleigh Street. A

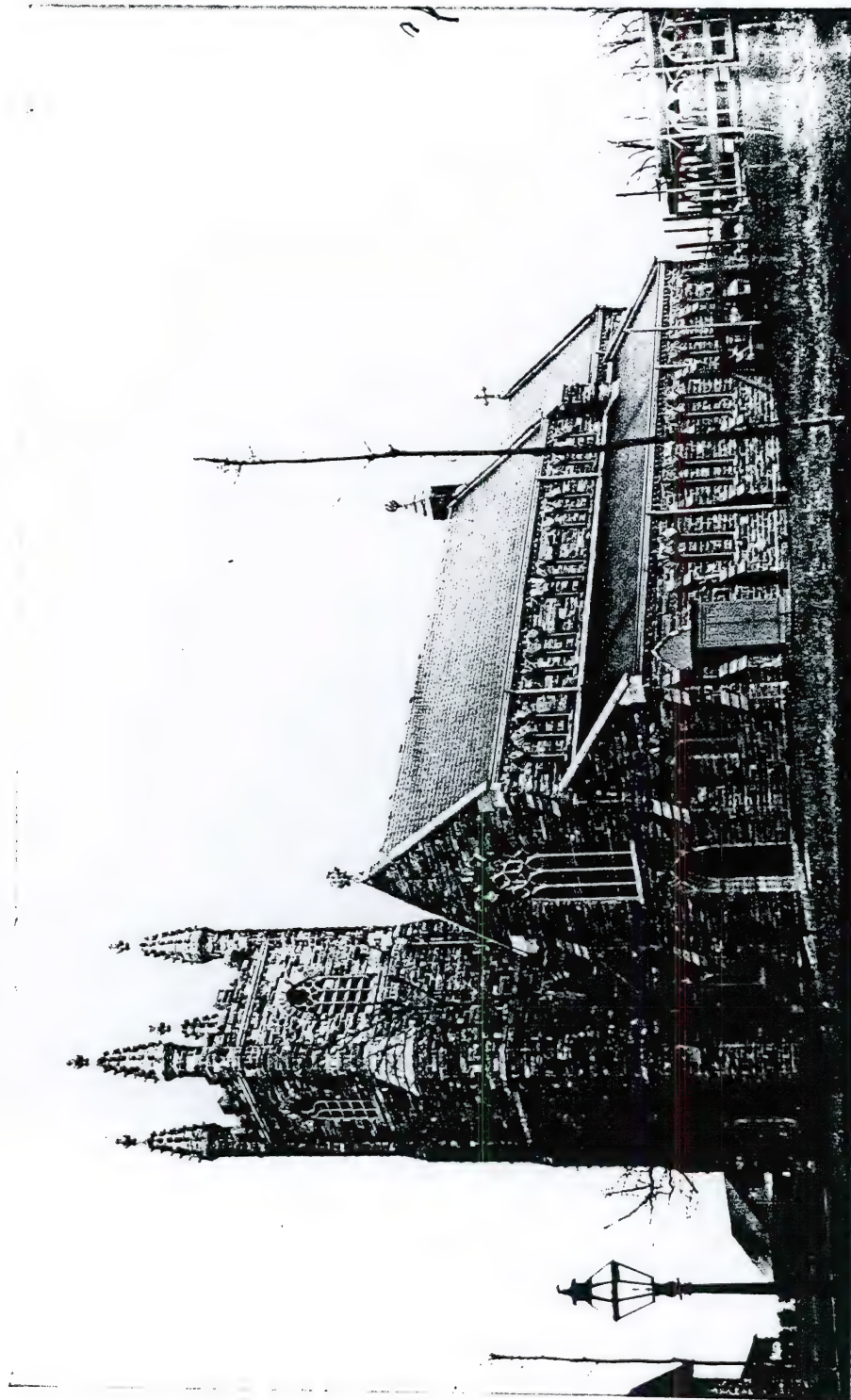


fourth option was to rebuild on the original site. The Vestry declined the first offer, not wanting to go below Sedgwick Street. The congregation was polled, and members were asked to pledge. Feelings ran high. Pledges were made, but many with the proviso that the church be built on the favored site of the donor. Franklin Gowen pledged a generous \$6,000 in addition to the donated ground, giving proposition number three the edge. The breakdown of proffered funding was: present location--\$18,200, Germantown and Gowen--\$14,220, Gowen and Ardleigh--\$20,000. The second choice had two big offers adding up to \$8,000, a painful amount to turn down. But the site was small and the rectory and parish house would have to be built elsewhere. The Gowens did have two stipulations: one that the tower be on the north side, and the other that the church itself be on the corner. Let us digress at this point for a few words about this family.

James Gowen emigrated from Ireland in 1811, became a successful merchant, and eventually retired to a farm in Mt. Airy. His land holdings were bordered by what are now Mt. Airy Avenue, Cheltenham Avenue, the Pennsylvania Railroad spur near Mermald Lane, and several plots on the west side of Germantown Avenue. He was married to Mary Miller; they lived in the Miller House at 7331 Germantown Avenue, which he had acquired from his father-in-law. Later he built and lived in Magnolia Villa, which is now the Lutheran Seminary's Hagan Hall. Son James E. Gowen moved into the Miller house. Another son, Franklin, set out on a career which took him to Schuylkill County. In time he was elected District Attorney. Real drama came a few years later when, as counsel for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, he prosecuted a number of the Molly Maguires, the secret society that had terrorized the anthracite coal region for twenty years. Dealing with such a band was a risky business. The prosecution hired detectives and gathered evidence, resulting in the conviction and execution of a number of the leaders, enough to bring about the end of the organization. In 1870 he became president of the Reading Railroad. An able administrator, his record was flawed by some financial difficulties. In an effort to insure that the Reading would always have coal to transport, he bought coal lands upstate. The company was overextended and went bankrupt. Eventually it recovered, but by this time Mr. Gowen had retired to practice law and returned to Mt. Airy.

Back to Grace Church and plans for a new building. Architect Charles M. Burns, Jr., was employed and bids were solicited from builders. After numerous discussions a plan was adopted. On June 13, 1888, at 1:00 P.M., Mr. Hill offered a prayer as the first spadefuls of earth were dug by Mr. Charles Miller, Mr. Hill, Mr. Miller's daughters Rachel and Elizabeth, and Mrs. Hartman. Among those present were the Reverends Atkins, John B. Faulkner, Joseph Miller, and James H. Lamb. So many decisions to be made in the months to follow! Should there be a cement foundation? Pews with inclined backs? What type of heating plant? Where to put the font? What building materials? The ladies were invited to select chancel furniture and to decide the type of pulpit and lectern. But such things as wainscoting, plastering, slate sub-basing, tile-laying, and the construction of battlements were better left to the men.





*The church at the beginning of the century. Construction has begun on the parish house.*



The scene at the laying of the cornerstone on September 18, 1888, is graphically recorded in a photograph. Gathered before the partially erected building were ladies in dresses with bustles, carrying parasols; gentlemen in stand-up collars; young girls in straw hats, some with a single braid of hair down the back; and numerous clergy (no fashion comment necessary). After appropriate prayers and Psalms, Bishop Whitaker struck the stone three times with a hammer, proclaiming "I lay the cornerstone of an edifice to be here erected by the name of Grace Church, Mt. Airy, and to be devoted to the service of almighty God, agreeably to the principles of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, in its doctrines, ministry, liturgy, rites and usages." A little over a year later, on November 13, the church was consecrated by Bishop Whitaker with Bishop Whitehead of Pittsburgh, a classmate of Mr. Hill's, the preacher. About sixty clergy were present and vested. Afterward, clergy and officers were entertained at the home of Franklin Gowen.

Meanwhile, earlier in this important year, on February 20, the organizational meeting of the women's "working guild" was held. Simeon Hill was made president and Mrs. Charles Bayard vice president. What a fortunate event for the church of that day and all others to come! Immediately they set about raising money for the new church, and highly successful they were. In the year to come they supplied the stone pulpit, chancel rail, pew cushions, bishop's chair, an altar, communion table, rugs, surplices, cassocks, alms plates, prayer books and hymnals, choir stalls, tiling for the chancel, a brass lectern; and they furnished their own guild room and the Vestry room.

Also during this year the Vestry had another matter to consider: the disposition of the old church. It was sold to Frederick Gowen for \$14,000 and all indebtedness for the new church was settled. In reading the Vestry minutes of 1889 one is struck by the powerful presence of Franklin Gowen, always putting forth motions and suggestions. Following his absence in December, the January 1890 minutes contain a moving testimonial to the gentleman, a Vestry custom for members who died in office. The previous month he had gone to Washington to appear before the Interstate Commerce Commission in behalf of one of his clients. In his hotel room he committed suicide by firing a bullet into his brain. The comment on this unhappy event in the *Dictionary of American Biography* reads, "No satisfactory explanation could be found for his act; he was fifty-three years of age, in good health, at the height of his mental powers, well-to-do and enjoying the respect of his contemporaries." And, we might add, this occurred one month after the consecration of his beloved church, and his was its first funeral.

In 1890 there was more largesse from the Gowens. Mrs. Franklin Gowen donated the money to erect the parish house and Mrs. James Gowen gave more land to be either mortgaged or sold. (The Vestry opted for the latter.) A rectory was built, organist Vernon Cassel was hired, and a boys' choir trained to replace the mixed quartet that had been serving until this time. The first of many missionary boxes of handmade clothing was sent by the women.



During the next few years much was done to embellish and furnish the church and parish house. One typical example was the Vestry authorization for the Church School to buy furniture--the twenty dozen chairs, twenty tables, five-dozen infant chairs that were needed. But all this was not to cost more than \$200.00! In 1893 indoor plumbing arrived in the form of a ladies' room, and a year later the men's facilities were augmented by a screen and boardwalk. However the men were to remain relegated to the out-of-doors for a few more years. In 1896 there was still a \$7,000.00 mortgage, which was neatly polished off by the women in the next five years. Perhaps some of the money came from the Birthday Fund. Every woman was supposed to donate a penny for each year of her age on her birthday. This custom was to last more than sixty years.

By the turn of the century there were two hundred and fifty-five communicants, all of whom were expected to rent either their entire pew or a single sitting. The By-Laws were very specific on the subject. One was not allowed to give away a pew or "sublet" it. As for the sittings, it was strictly on a first-come-first-served basis, any disputes to be settled by the Rector's Warden. The choice spots were in the center front, the first five or six rows excepted. Eventually, the back six were designated as free. In spite of many Vestry discussions on the subject, the practice was to continue until after World War II. Achieving financial stability by harnessing the vainglory of the church members was perhaps justified, but it would seem to be the antithesis of Christian philosophy. Blessed were the rich.

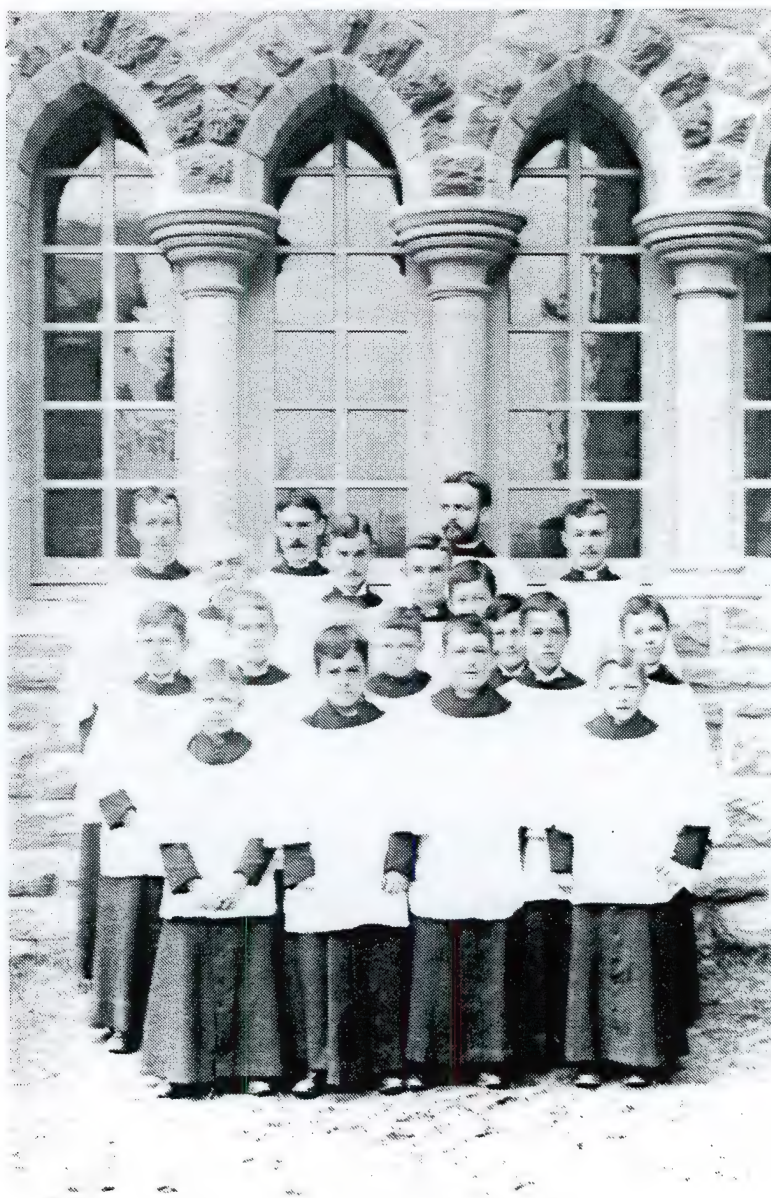
In 1902 the Church School was thriving, and by Margaret Nowell's contemporary account, academic expectations ran high. "I remember that we learned collects and were given pretty little cards with Bible texts for each one, and when we had learned ten we were given a larger card. The Sunday School was upstairs, and we always sang 'Onward Christian Soldiers' when we marched into church." Her sister, Eleanor Davis, adds that there was a sign at the top of the stairs with the admonishment "You Are Late" (or early) depending on the hour. And, to make matters worse, the Superintendent stood there and monitored all arrivals, which could prove embarrassing. Doris Saxon wrote about her teacher, Mrs. Lowber, who was in charge of a large group of children. She owned a good-size woods nearby where Church School picnics were held. It was during this period that stage coaches were used to pick up and deliver children of kindergarten age.

An event of considerable importance occurred in Mt. Airy in 1904. Fred MacFarland opened his barber shop at 7112 Germantown Avenue, and generations of Mt. Airyites were to owe their well-groomed appearance to him and his staff. It was *the* barber shop. Included in the decor was this sign: "Please do not use profanity," in deference to the students from the nearby Lutheran Theological Seminary. Other tradesmen in the area were a blacksmith, a harness maker, and a scissors grinder and umbrella repairman who would go from house to house. Chestnut Hill was still for many of its residents a summer resort.

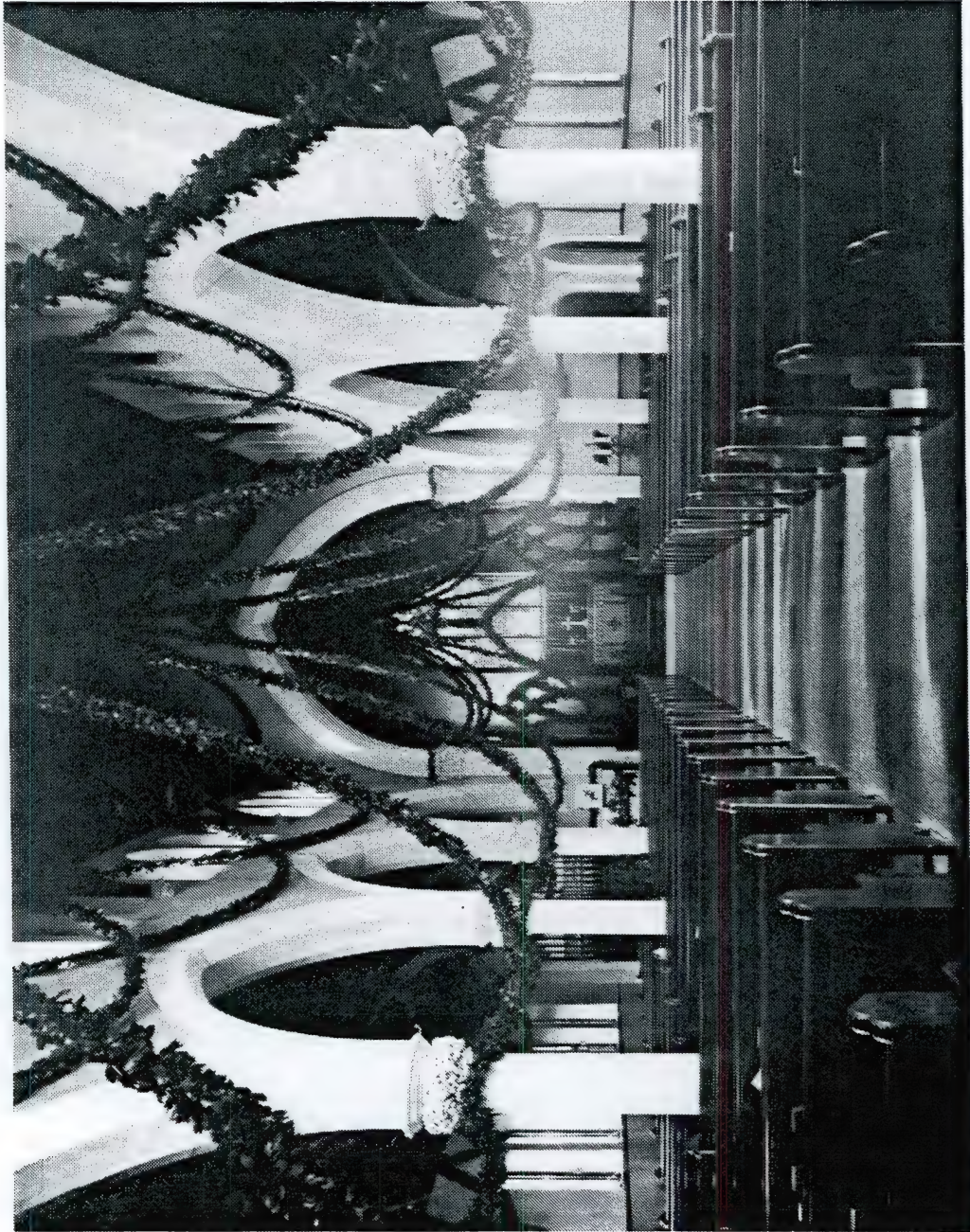


In 1907 the women exerted a bit of pressure on the Vestry, perhaps feeling they had earned the right to do so. They were dissatisfied with the choir and music, complaining that the boys were not properly trained, had poor enunciation, and incorrect time; were unruly; and that the music selection was poor. Capitulating to their charges, the organist of twenty years resigned. Another organist was hired but he, too, resigned after two years. We can only speculate as to his reasons.

*The choir of  
men and boys,  
photographed  
at the time of  
their founding  
in 1890.*







*An early photograph of the church decorated for Christmas.*



The choir was again the subject of controversy in 1912. A suggestion was made that girls be invited to join. The Vestry Music Committee ruminated on this for awhile, eventually assuming an almost impassioned stance. "We see no reason to believe that this would result in improved quality of the volume of the music. Boys, being younger than the girls who have volunteered, are more amenable to discipline and instruction, and better able to give the time needed for the careful, regular, and thorough preparation required for even the simple services we have. We can all remember the cartoons depicting the affairs of various sorts going on in the choir during the sermon. We have prevented anything of this sort by maintaining a boys' choir. We see no reason why we should now incur such a risk." Since such a perilous step could only lead to disaster, they decided to leave the choir's purity intact. After all, look what happened to Adam.

Also during this time, plans were made to enlarge the parish house. Designs for a new altar and reredos were submitted to the Vestry, to be donated by Henry Dunn. Mr. Needham and his brothers planted trees and shrubbery free of charge, and pigeons took up housekeeping in the tower. Probably the most significant addition to the church during these years was the magnificent rood screen. Legend has it that it was constructed from a form of white sand stone found in Italy. When freshly quarried the stone is soft, lending itself to intricate carving. With exposure to the air it becomes quite hard. This graceful division between nave and chancel, with its swirling vines and leaves and solemn figures was the gift of James Wilson Bayard, at what cost we do not know. In 1964 the estimated value was between \$100,000 and \$200,000. By contrast, in 1910 the whole church was appraised at \$52,000. Mr. Bayard was another Grace Church mainstay. This handsome lawyer, dark of hair and beard, with clear blue eyes, was most generous with both time and money. Active on the Vestry, he was also a stalwart choir member in spite of the fact that the choirmaster frequently chided him for being off-key.

A 1987 interview with Robert Cridlund yielded many memories of the years just before the first World War. "A man I always admired was George Alexander West, F.A.G.O., our choirmaster, who pounded out the beat with his oversized wedding band. When we got off key he'd call out with his Scotch accent, 'Beastly tone don't you know,' and then we'd have to sing 'tel a sorio' to arpeggios up and down the scale until he considered us fit to proceed. It was always fun to go early to choir rehearsals and go down into the catacombs under the altar, to sit by the nice warm boiler and listen to Mr. Wagenbaugh, the verger, play his homemade violin. Another person I remember was Mrs. Thompson, our choir mother. She would get our big black bow ties and Buster Brown collars all straight and our cottas all hanging just so, and then we'd develop a terrible thirst. We'd kneel on the floor to drink from the spigot at the mop sink. We'd come up a wreck just as the processional hymn was starting. The Vestry were captivating as they accepted the Sunday offering. They stepped briskly up the aisle, each one shaved to the blood---mustaches neatly waxed and trimmed---clicking their heels on the tile floor in perfect cadence. The beams of sunlight were glistening on their shiny, bald heads, the



tails of their morning coats sailing behind them as their striped morning trousers flapped in a most interesting manner. This was a well-drilled team. With their yellow chamois gloves and white carnations they were really something to see, the epitome of dignity. We choirboys called them the walruses."

Eleanor Davis tells of the time her mother sent her to the church with some flowers for the ailing Mrs. Simeon Hill. The family lived on Mt. Airy Avenue, and her walk took her through a woods and across the little stream behind the church. Her knock at the rectory was answered by Mr. Hill who gently explained, "My dear child, Mrs. Hill just died a few minutes ago." The Vestry minutes of 1910 describe her in this manner. "Never robust, with delicate strength, she had a cheerful disposition and enthusiasm. She worked hard to keep up with a growing parish." Two years later, on July 16, Mr. Hill resigned. He died in October the same year.

Guy Apeldorn pictured the late Rector in this way: "He was often garbed as were the Episcopal clergy of the day in frock coat, white wing collar (piccadilly), narrow white necktie (hand-tied), vest extending up to the neck with a band attached which lay up close to the collar. He was broad of face with a full reddish beard, in stature about five feet seven inches and full bodied. A commanding figure." He was characterized as having great interest and love for children but had none of his own. Another concern was for the members of the parish confined to their homes, whom he frequently visited to lessen their isolation. The December 1912 *Church News* of the Diocese of Pennsylvania included a tribute by a committee from the Clerical Brotherhood of which Simeon Hill was a member. "His contributions to our discussions were respected. He was frankly a partisan, tenacious and vigorous, but we think he never lost the regard of those who most differed from him. We have been impressed by his simplicity and straightforwardness, his rugged manliness and sincerity." Having become Rector when the church was weakened by the withdrawal of a number of its members, his was the guiding hand through all the years of building and growth. He endeared himself to the parish and the neighborhood, and, fortunately, lived long enough to reap some of the benefits of his hard work.

#### **The Reverend Thomas Sparks Cline**

By 1913 Philadelphia had a transit system second to none in the country. Underground tunnels and numerous elevated tracks had been built and it was even possible to get a trolley at Sixteenth and Chestnut Streets and ride all the way to Willow Grove Amusement Park. Lit Brothers and Wanamaker's department stores were doing a healthy business on Market Street; Horn and Hardart had launched their first automat. Leopold Stokowski was made conductor of the Philadelphia Orchestra. The urban population was more than one million three hundred thousand, much of it spilling over into the outlying areas such as Mt. Airy.

On March 1, 1913, the Reverend Thomas S. Cline became Rector of Grace Church. An able successor to Simeon Hill, he quickly exhibited his leadership



# Grace Church School of Christian Faith and Practice

Mount Airy, Philadelphia

✦ ✦ ✦

This is to Certify that

*James C. ...*

has been regularly promoted from the PRIMARY DEPARTMENT to the JUNIOR DEPARTMENT,

on this the *11th* day of *June*, 19 *19*.

*Wm. S. Arlington-Burke,*  
Superintendent of Primary Department

*J. Mendelson Meehan*  
Rector of School



A Church School certificate showing the church as seen through the woods



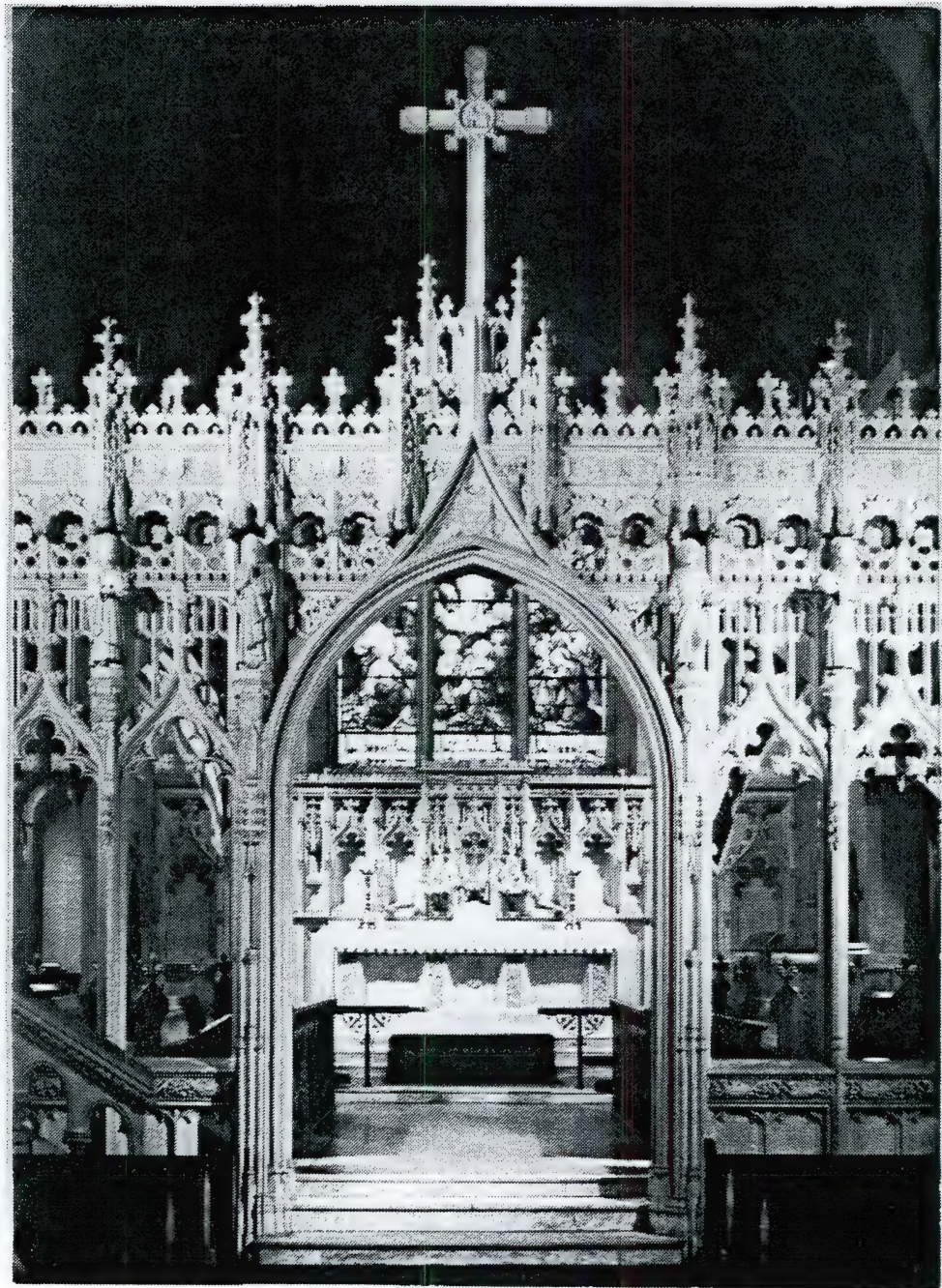
qualities. A men's Bible class was started and then one for the women. Another innovation was the Communicants' Guild, organized to help keep the newly confirmed from lapsing. Members were encouraged to make regular communions and there were rallies twice a year. This organization lasted about ten years. Mr. Cline's concern for the children of the parish is shown in this excerpt from a letter to them at the end of the church school year in 1914: "I can't stand it not to see you Sundays all summer, so I am going to ask all who care to come, to meet me Sunday mornings at ten o'clock. It will not be a service, nor will it be like school—oh no, just a pleasant informal meeting, perhaps out under the trees, perhaps in the church."

The year 1914 was a lively one. An endowment fund was started with a legacy from Simeon Hill, the women raised \$1,000 at a bazaar held at Stenton Country Club, and Robert MacDonald started a Boy Scout troop. This was an extremely successful venture if the monthly reports in the *Parish News* are to be believed. Many camping trips and other outings, as well as the usual troop meetings, were part of the program, and even a party now and then to which the girls were invited. There seemed to be no end of opportunities for church involvement, for still another group was started, the Young Churchman's Association. The study of the life of Christ was its main purpose, but there was room for music, entertainment, and fellowship, and it is considered the forerunner of the highly successful Men's Club.

The highlight of 1914 was the twenty-fifth anniversary dedication festival. This week-long observance of the anniversary of the church's consecration was full of activity. Sunday, November first, had the usual two services of Holy Communion at 7:30 and 11:00 o'clock, Morning Prayer at 10:30, Evening Prayer at 4:00, and a service in the interest of religious education at 8:00. Each weekday started with Holy Communion at 7:30. Monday had a conference on religious education at 3:30 and a meeting of the Junior Auxillary from 3:00 to 7:00 with tea and addresses. The Tuesday schedule included a conference on social service at 3:30 and a parish reception at 8:00. Wednesday saw an 11:30 Women's Auxillary meeting with an address, and an 8:00 o'clock conference of parish workers. Thursday was the day of the men's dinner, the bishop being one of several speakers. On Friday there were held Litany and Intercessions for Peace at 5:00 plus the annual meeting of the Communicants' Guild at 8:00. On Saturday there was a children's party at 3:00 at which time an oak tree was planted in the church yard followed by another address. The culminating event was the delivery of the historical sermon by the Reverend James Hart Lamb, D.D., on Sunday.

In 1914, while all this was going on at Grace Church, the nation was gearing up for the war effort and Philadelphia was in the forefront. Eventually forty percent of American military commodities supplied to troops were manufactured in this city. The population was a mosaic of ethnic groups, most of whom were in sympathy with the Allied cause. The mood was patriotic, bringing volunteers into the Army, money into government bonds, and workers into the factories. The Women's Guild, ever anxious to respond to any human need anywhere, immersed themselves in wartime concerns. Money was sent to





*The church with its rood screen, altar, reredos, and stained glass.*



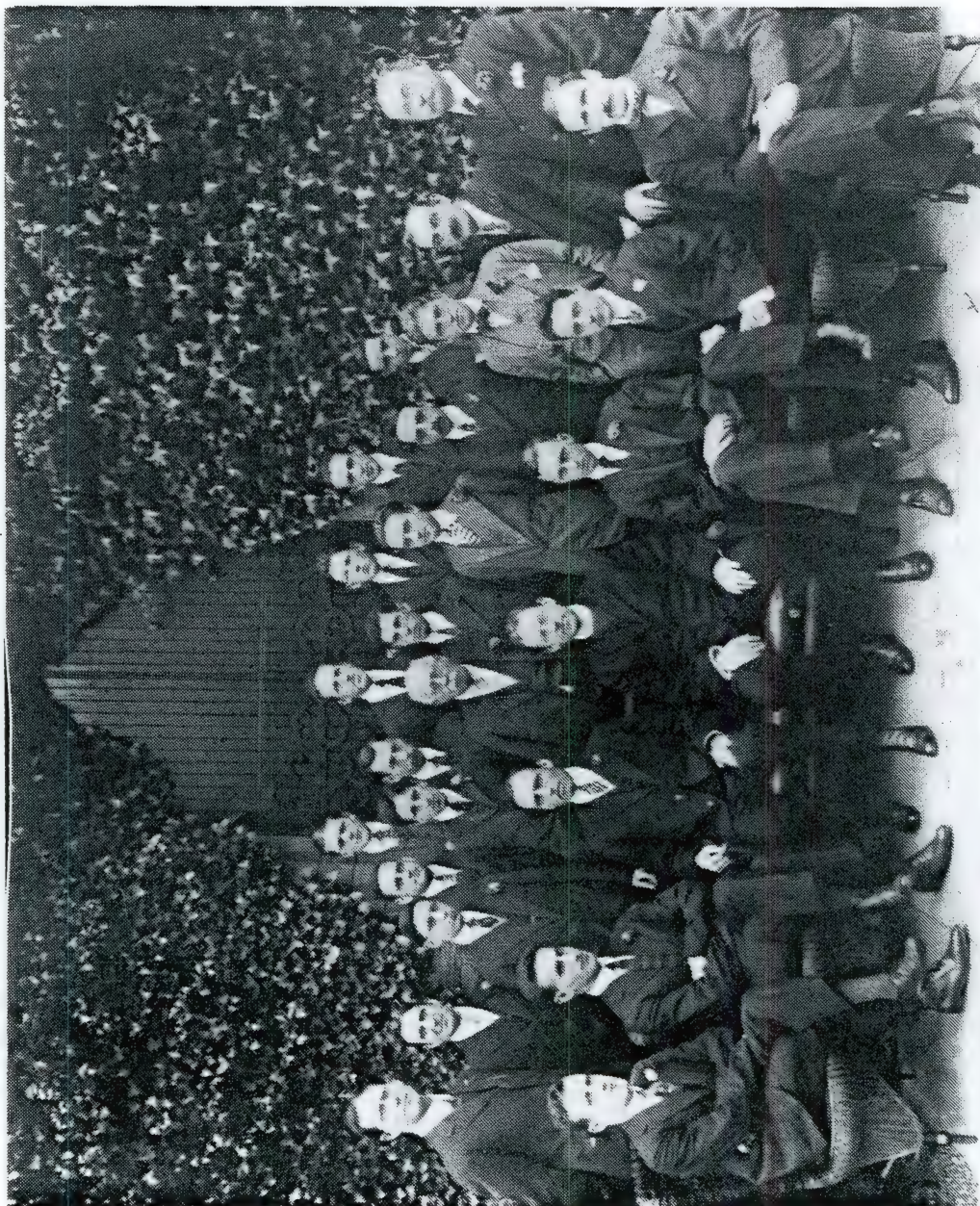
the Belgian Fund and the servicemen's chocolate fund; infants' clothing was sent to France for French babies. But their major involvement was with the Red Cross for whom they knit copious amounts of clothing and made numerous surgical bandages. By 1917 six workrooms in the parish house constituted the Mt. Airy branch of that organization. Their output was the second largest in the whole Southeastern Pennsylvania chapter. Eleanor Davis looks back on this era: "During the first World War we made bandages in the Parish House and did something called picking oakum. I don't know what in the world oakum was used for, but it had something to do with treating wounds. We wore white Red Cross things on our heads which made us feel very important."

Thomas Cline could not resist the call to arms and was granted a leave of absence to serve as chaplain with the armed forces in Europe. Mrs. Cline remained in the rectory; the Rector was kept on full salary and was highly commended for his patriotism by the bishop. The organist followed suit, as did other members of the parish, and eventually a silk service flag and bronze plaque were displayed in their honor. Mr. Cline's letters to his congregation contained poignant vignettes of this "time of sorrows" as he called it. "Do you remember last Good Friday? How dark it grew during our three-hour devotions. Then it was that America solemnly entered the war. Then we faced our cross. Now we are beginning to feel its weight. At last America's blood is being shed. Our countrymen have taken their place in that great line of defense against humanity's ruthless foes. They have taken the brunt of a German attack. The French premier has commended them for their bravery." Another time he quoted the diary of a young soldier killed by a high explosive shell on his way to Sedan. "Sunday, October 27, 1918. Recicourt all ruins. Beautiful day in the woods. Chaplain Cline served Holy Communion in barracks at ten this morning. Certainly was impressive to see so many—should judge one hundred—on bended knee in prayer and confession. They took turns in kneeling before the altar and partaking of Christ's broken body and shed blood. Sure thankful to be able to do this again 'in remembrance of him.' Sure brought home and heaven near, and enjoyed a spiritual uplift here back of the lines in sound of distant battle. Quite an opportunity."

Thomas Cline was welcomed back in May of 1919. In 1916 the Young Churchmen's Association had changed both its name and focus. Now called "The Way" it was a course of training in Christian religion and only the most dedicated of church members (male) were admitted. But during the war attitudes changed and interests became more secular, and so the organization had declined. In an interview in 1961 Mr. Cline told Jack Clapham that The Way was the highlight of his entire ministry. There was joy when it flourished, disappointment when it faltered. Responding to the changing needs of the parish, the Churchman's League was formed. Similar in plan and scope to the Women's Guild, it was to include all the men's parish activities and was organized into five departments: The Way, Brotherhood of St. Andrew, Missions, Social Service, and Entertainment.

Another important event of 1919 was the launching of an ambitious \$25,000 campaign for (1) a new organ, (2) a new heating plant, (3) a parish





*The Brotherhood of St. Andrew. Thomas Cline in the center.*



office, (4) paying the debt on the lot behind the church. The Church School was expanded to include a three-hour stretch on Monday afternoons. Further evidence of the importance of Christian education is shown in these words from Doris Saxon. "I taught Church School in Dr. Cline's day. We met on a week day, gave periodic examinations, and had promotions." One more change was to occur in that year, pew rents were finally abolished.

The decade of the twenties has been described as one of fun and frolic. Activities at Grace Church were still pretty serious. But there were several deviations from the usual austerity. For one thing a dancing class was started for the boys and girls. But such goings-on were thought to be inappropriate for Lent, and instructive motion pictures were shown instead. Jack Clapham wrote of something even more radical that happened in 1924. "A major departure from tradition, and one destined to be the subject of considerable controversy was the decision to invite the ladies to a league dinner." There were grumblings heard at meetings: "The two best ways to ruin a good men's club are to invite the ladies or to let the Rector run the club." However, the club did survive and even had a few repeat performances of this co-ed evening.

1921 saw the installation of the Ernest Skinner organ (still there today) at a cost of \$15,000 with another \$3,500 for the wiring. And immediately thereafter, carved wooden screens were put up to shield the many organ pipes, these the gift of, who else, James Bayard. In 1922 there was a personnel change that was to affect the church for more than half a century. Newell Robinson came on board as organist. The young redhead was considered terribly "cute" by the teenage girls of the church, an almost ludicrous description in light of the dedicated, formidable firebrand he was to become.

Two years later the Vestry accepted with regret the resignation of Thomas Cline. He had accepted a call to become Rector of St. Peter's church in New York City and Professor of Pastoral Theology at the General Theological Seminary. The Vestry resolution adopted in his honor praised him for the progress the church had made during his tenure. The building had been enhanced by many memorials, land had been acquired to prevent crowding. But more important was his openness to new ideas and his desire to foster the spiritual growth of both young and old of the parish. His letters to the congregation bespeak his eloquence and scholarly bent as well as his intense faith. All that and a magnificent tenor voice too. For some, the fondest and most vivid memory of him was his rendition of "Good King Wenceslas" every Christmas with his son. Grace Church had ten very good years.

#### **The Reverend Charles E. Eder**

In the spring of 1959 a farewell party for Dr. Eder on his retirement was held at the Philadelphia Cricket Club. As the guest of honor stepped into the ballroom, the small band struck up the tune "Mr. Wonderful," an appropriate choice reflecting the sentiments of the assembled parishioners. A tall,



impressive man with a splendid display of white hair and a mellifluous voice, he was ending thirty-four years of dedicated ministry at Grace Church. A native of Philadelphia, he had received degrees from St. Stephen's College, Harvard University, and the University of Pennsylvania; and had studied at the General Theological Seminary in New York. He had been curate at St. Martin in the Fields and Rector of Christ Episcopal Church in Ridley Park prior to coming to Grace Church in January of 1925.

The transition from Thomas Cline to Charles Eder was a smooth one and parish life continued undisturbed with an abundance of activities. In June of 1925 the Young People's Fellowship put on a play called *The Flower Shop*, coached by Adelaide Sheble. The enterprising young people solicited many ads from the local merchants for their printed program: MacFarland's Sanitary Shaving Parlor, Rinker's Pharmacy, and the Rialto movie theater featuring Wanda Hawley and Wallace Beery in *Let Women Alone*. A month before, the Men's Service League had given a dinner with speaker Dr. Thomas Travis expounding on *The Call of the Moose*. Later in that year there was an attempt at progress in the form of a Vestry motion. It was moved that a committee of three be appointed to confer with the Rector on ways of involving the congregation in the election of the Vestry. The motion perished, as did hopes for the democratic process for the time being.

The women continued to churn out a staggering amount of clothing and bandages for a large variety of far-flung recipients: St. Andrew's School in Sewanee, Tennessee, Penland in Appalachia, lepers in Japan, Mt. Mary's School for Indian girls in South Dakota, to name a few. In one report they proudly claimed, "our output of garments is second to no church in the Diocese either in quantity or in the standard of workmanship."

There were more dramatics by the YPF in 1927, *A Night Off* in January and *The Fascinating Fanny Brown* in May. This last production included a supper "entirely home-cooked by the men of the Service League," as reported in the *Parish News*. Not only that, the men had built the stage for the production. This tantalizing note appeared in the pre-play publicity: "Mr. Ball promises to turn on the new electric lights in the parish house for the first time." And all this for a dollar a person. Not only did the men support the YPF, they too had tried their hand at theatrical productions with a rendition of *Untangling Tony* in February.

The Reverend Craig Eder, son of the Rector, and his sister Shirley Eder Laird, both remember an interesting trip at the end of the decade. Wrote Craig, "The Mediterranean cruise on the *U.S.S. California* in 1929 was a significant event that brought a group in the parish very close together and was the source of much inspiration." Shirley elaborated, "Thirty people from Grace Church went on the cruise, which was really something. It was wonderful for Dad because from then on in his sermons he could always picture the River Jordan, and he would describe it, or he would bring things to show. The trip lasted a month, maybe even longer." For many people, the ability to afford such a lovely excursion was about to end.



The Great Depression hurt Philadelphia less than it did most sections of the country, but the city did have its share of street corner apple-sellers. There was a run on Albert M. Greenfield's Banker's Trust Co. forcing it to close. After that, one other large bank, the Frankford Trust, went under as did many small banks, including the Mt. Airy Bank. Today's monetary safeguards did not exist at the time. The newly organized United Campaign plus some gallant private philanthropy tried to stem the tide of poverty, but it took the might of federal emergency programs such as the WPA (Works Progress Administration) to have any real impact.

Grace Church felt the effects and this prayer became familiar: "Help us to realize our responsibility for the injustices of our social and industrial life; fill us with the desire to purify our civilization and make it truly Christian that we may be delivered from the evils of grinding poverty and excessive riches." Vestryman Pratt Thompson summed up the church's plight in this 1930 report, "Our financial situation is not nearly as pleasing as it was a year ago." There was concern about the stability of the Germantown Savings Fund where the church had an account. The Social Service Committee was kept busy supplying "clothes for the ill-clad and securing institutional care for the needy." The women, hearing of the extreme poverty and terrible sickness in the St. Barnabas parish, held a benefit card party. And the Rector urged those of the parish fortunate enough to have work to show their gratitude by increasing their pledges. Such action would help compensate for the unemployed. There was belt-tightening: Newell Robinson offered not to buy any new music and to reduce the number of paid choirboys to twenty. New curate, John Erwin, was given a salary cut, the church school bus was eliminated and mission giving curtailed. Dr. Eder did what he could for those of the parish in direst need.

It wasn't all doom and gloom during this era. There were suppers, picnics, swimming parties, and the YPF fielded a basketball team that won a league championship. The men's attempts at drama reached new heights with the show *The Mystery of Mt. Airy, or Who Drank the Hair Tonic*. In the February 1932 *Parish News* there was this announcement from the women, "Several delightful affairs have been arranged for a nominal charge," proceeds to go towards eliminating the deficit. An ambitious undertaking in 1933 was the formation of something called a living magazine titled *The Lamp*. The December issue featured a live demonstration of a metal craftsman describing his work, the Hilltop Chorus of twenty singing old French carols, a talk on pageantry followed by a Christmas pageant. Other issues were equally full and interesting. It was in this same year that the Men's Service League became the Men's Club. It was governed by an executive committee of thirty-six. Whatever activity was going on in the parish, Charles Eder was there.

As is often the case in times of woe, church attendance was high. There were more confirmations and transfers than at any other time in the church's history. However Dr. Eder noted that he had officiated at more funerals than at any time in his career except for the flu epidemic of 1918. In 1935 the women of the parish had a dinner to celebrate the Eder's ten years at the



church. Shirley Laird remembers, "Mother and Dad were given a beautiful silver service, and Mother was quite overcome. And later we thought 'Wasn't that nice of them to give that to us,' and whenever there was a tea at church they borrowed it!"

On that occasion Dr. Eder reflected on his early years at the church. "You know there are many difficult decisions and delicate balancings of judgment to be made almost day by day. All that one can do is trust the Master. And as you meet people and they begin to be individuals, you realize that they are your people."

By the mid-thirties Newell Robinson had the music program at Grace Church firmly in hand. If the organ was the king of instruments, then Dr. Robinson was its loyal subject. This love for the instrument was exceeded only by his total commitment to his job in the service of the Lord. He was known as "Fess," short for professor, perhaps because of his penchant for teaching the background and meaning of the liturgy to his young charges. It was an especially appropriate name, for he was to become simultaneously with his Grace Church position an instructor at the Philadelphia Divinity School and the Eastern Baptist Seminary, and he had private piano and organ students as well.



*Newell Robinson leads a pre-service rehearsal of treble voices, 1966*



There were two groups of choristers: the girls' choir, unpaid, who rehearsed once a week and sang at the early children's service, and the paid men's and boys' choir who sang at the eleven o'clock service rehearsing three times a week for the boys and once for the men. Attendance at rehearsals and services was compulsory; behavior was expected to be exemplary. The Reverend Robert MacDonald remembers seeing an irate Newell Robinson crouched beside the organ during a sermon, shaking his fist at some transgressors across the chancel. "The choirmaster, somewhat a tyrant in our eyes, used to sling hymnals with deadly accuracy at errant boys," wrote former member John Thomas. And Shirley Laird recalls, "He broke some piano keys. That worried Dad, but he didn't know whether to mention that to him or not because Dad knew he was a genius." On balance, he made his choirs feel that their singing in Grace Church on Sunday morning was more important than anything else going on in the world at that moment. For many a youngster the sense of self-worth rose accordingly. Jeanne DaCosta Shelton commented, "We had an excellent choir under the leadership of Newell Robinson. He had red hair, a fiery temper, but boy, could he make us sing, and we all loved him." Pre-service instructions could well be compared to pre-game pep talks by football coach Knute Rockne. As Notre Dame players were exhorted to "win one for the Gipper," so Grace Church choir members were expected to do the same for God.

The music program peaked during the thirties and forties. Proving their ability in the secular literature, the choir put on operettas such as *Hansel and Gretel*, *Rumpelstiltskin*, and *Iolanthe*. Sometimes part of the choir would go on the road and sing with other choirs at such places as Philadelphia's Town Hall or Convention Hall. Every year four boys or girls were taken to New York to sing Evensong at the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine. As a reward for all this hard work there were many outings--picnics, trips to the circus or to Riverview Beach on the Delaware. But best of all was a near-fantasy day spent at Atlantic City.

The rallying point was on Front Street at the foot of Market. From Mt. Airy, this meant a pre-dawn ride on the 23 trolley to Market Street, then another trolley east to the river. A ferry to New Jersey was next, then a train to the shore, Grace Church filling an entire car. After arrival came a swim in the salt water pool at the Ambassador Hotel followed by a sojourn to the beach. Lunch at a cafeteria preceded the day's highlight. The Grace Church choir was turned loose on Steel Pier for the afternoon, a wondrous place where, for one admission, there was an enormous array of entertainment available. There were dance bands, vaudeville shows, a fun house, six movie theaters, and the water show with its famed diving horse. The thought of shepherding a large group of excited, energetic children through such a day-long variety of activities is enough to make one shudder. But to someone with such total control of his charges as Newell Robinson, it probably did not present an enormous challenge. However, one year there was a mishap. Bill Powell, one of five brothers who sang in the choir, missed the train back to Philadelphia. The resourceful young man hopped the next train, hid in the men's room since he had neither ticket or money, and became a hero to his fellow singers when it was all over.



All of the church's organizations rode full throttle through the rest of the thirties. Plays, dinners, luncheons, speakers, festivals, scout meetings were regular occurrences. The YPF was so strong that there was a spin-off group, The Dramateurs, whose plays included other members of the parish beside the young. So much activity began to put a strain on the limited facilities. "We shall have to do something about the parish house and soon," wrote the Rector in the *Parish News*. "Sometimes we are so worn out with the turmoil and efforts to have things go well that when the eleven o'clock service begins in church, we are seething inside and in no mood to lead the devotions of our people. Now what are we going to do about it?" Unfortunately the answer to that was "Nothing" for the time being.

Attendance at services was so great that a Vestry resolution concerning traffic patterns during communion was developed. "WHEREAS, it is important that the service of Holy Communion be administered with due reverence, be it resolved that the congregation be requested to observe the following conventions." Basically the congregation was urged not to rush to the altar rail and not to clog the aisles. Undoubtedly this state of affairs led to the custom of having two ushers control the number of communicants going forward at any given time. There was another noteworthy event in the thirties. Charles Eder was awarded an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from Temple University and gave the invocation at the mid-year commencement exercises on February 15, 1937.

This decade did not bring many changes to Mt. Airy. John Thomas described it in this way, "It was a quiet, tree-lined neighborhood. Stenton Avenue marked the edge of the developed area. At the corner of Gowen and Germantown was Krauss's drug store, just opposite Bracken's garage. New homes were being built a few blocks north of the church, but there was a lot of open country in that area. We used to pick cattails along the Reading Railroad. Opposite Roumfort Road there was a stone quarry. We played football on the PID (later, PSD, Pennsylvania School for the Deaf) grounds, and Fourth of July fireworks were a regular feature there."

The Depression was well over by 1941, but agony of another kind arrived with World War II. Once again Philadelphia's industries were ready and able to make what was needed. As during World War I, there was an influx of black people from the South attracted by the labor shortage and high wages, in what was to be the country's largest internal migration. Earl Williams, speaking of the experience of his own family and others remarked, "Wages were so low in the South that people had to scrimp and save to get to the North. After they got there they lived with family and friends in established neighborhoods. Once they got on their feet they started moving to some of the outlying areas of the city including Mt. Airy."

The war brought shortages--gas, sugar, meat, and heating oil were rationed. The Civilian Defense organization had a branch office on Germantown Avenue, headquarters for the air raid wardens, auxiliary firemen and policemen.



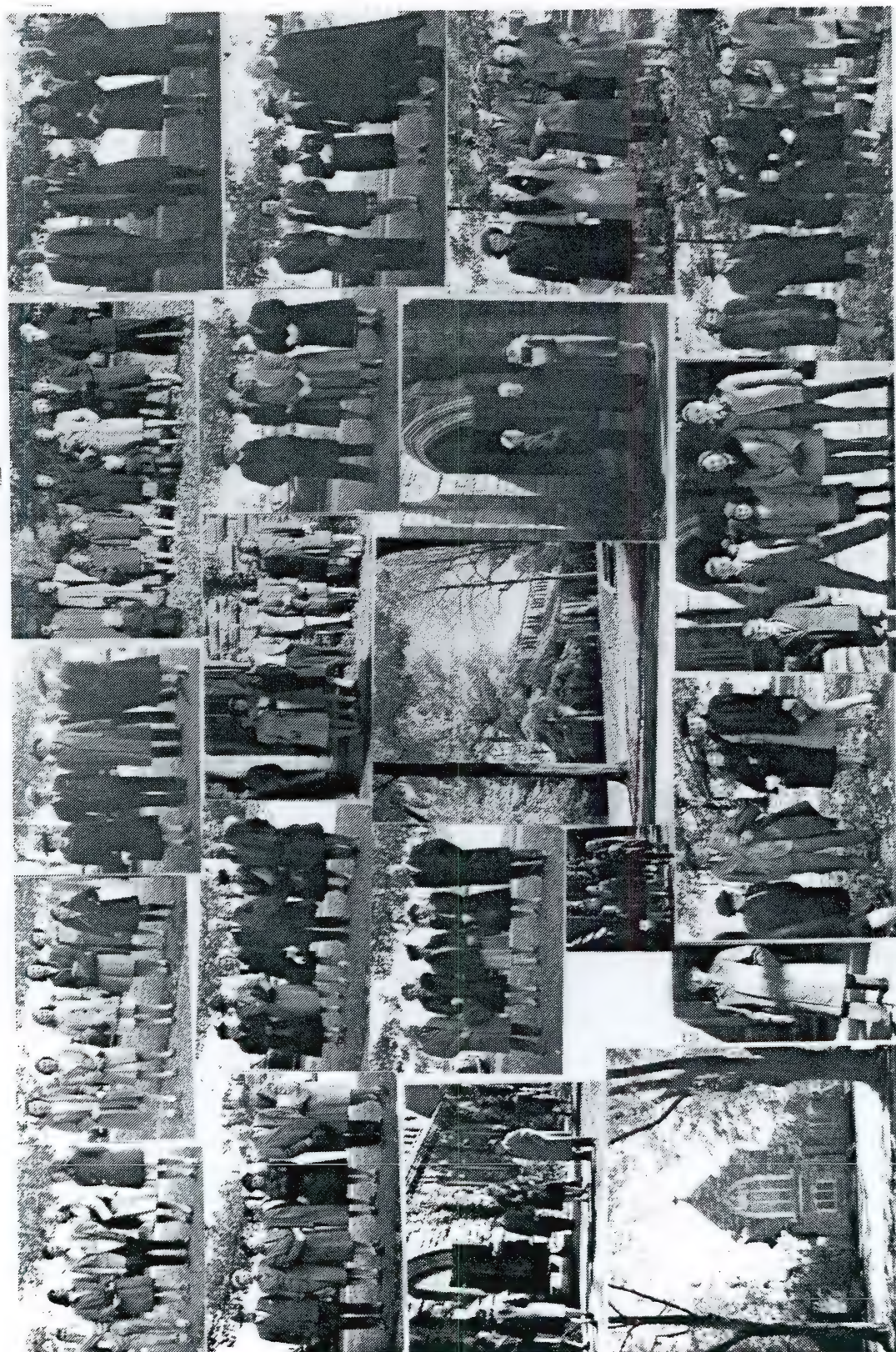
At Grace Church, buckets and sand and blackout materials for the windows were purchased in case of air raids. Parishioners were advised of bomb protection procedures, and plans were made to use the church for the wounded if necessary. The Vestry were notified by the OPA (Office of Price Administration) that it was mandatory for all public buildings to convert from oil to coal heat. Once again bandages were needed by the Red Cross. Every Monday morning, dozens of women donned white uniforms, covered their hair with filmy white scarves and dipped their hands in disinfectant. Once sufficiently sanitized they set about the day's work of folding gauze in a somewhat complicated manner until it arrived at the prescribed two-by-two-inch dimension.

Other groups in the church contributed in special ways. The YPF teenage boys took turns ringing the church bell every evening at six o'clock in what was called a Youth Angelus. It was meant as a reminder to those within earshot to pray for the men and women in the service. The Boy Scout troop did their bit by helping with the numerous scrap metal drives.

But it was the Men's Club that provided the direct link to the parish's sons and daughters in the service. Each man was assigned the name of a young person to whom he wrote regularly every month, and another name to whom he wrote for that one month alone. Thus each person received two letters every month. These two excerpts are typical of the touching responses to these communications. From somewhere in the Pacific: "This won't be a very happy Christmas for many of the boys alone in distant Army camps, much less for those who fight the enemy in foreign lands. But knowing their families and friends back home are thinking of them and waiting for their return means a world of difference in the morale." And this from Luzon: "I thank you for the photo of the interior of the church. It is beautiful, one I shall cherish forever. I never knew how great my love for the church was until I saw its picture a thousand miles away. I was as happy as a lark and proudly displayed it to my tentmates." A great many of the church's young men and women were either drafted or enlisted in the service of their country. Seven did not return.

The war had imposed a hiatus on building and renovating, but once over, planning could start again. A committee to raise funds for a new parish house was formed and another committee to consider ways of transforming the baptistry into a chapel. In 1945 a bombshell of a different kind was dropped at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Men's Club. Membership in this somewhat elite group was by invitation only and openings seldom occurred. Stanley Thornton, then Rector's Warden proposed that the ten men with the longest tenure rotate off the committee. Not only would this mean an infusion of new blood, but would make room for some of the returning servicemen. Don Putney, newly elected to the group, describes what happened next. "There was an absolute flat-out uproar over it. Some of the older members stood up in righteous indignation, wanting to know what in blazes was going on. This was no way to treat men who had given their lives to this group. This went on for a couple of hours." The motion went down to defeat.





*Collage from a pamphlet sent to the men and women in the service during World War II.*



On November 30, 1946, the new chapel was dedicated, the gift of Edith Fell. A simple altar, backdrop, communion rail and rows of chairs comprised this snug place of worship. A few years later new windows were put in. Quentin and Diana Blay, stained-glass artists, describe them in this way: "They are quite modern, vividly blue, jewel-like. They were designed and executed by Le Compte (of Washington) in his young days. He has since become one of the leading stained glass men in this country."

In 1947 Newell Robinson was given a testimonial dinner for his twenty-five years of service. The YPF was still going strong but not quite at the level of the thirties when meetings drew as many as seventy-five. Charles Carrigan reminisces about this group at the decade's end: "I remember we put on some shows, one-act plays, it was fun. Someone donated a jukebox, a beautiful Wurlitzer. A lot of people who weren't members of the church came to our meeting because of that jukebox." Another organization in existence during the forties and for some years to come was the Business and Professional Women's organization. They too had made bandages for the Red Cross, and after the war did sewing for the Church House. Sometimes a dinner was prepared for this group by their non-working sisters in the parish. Also during this era the Men's Club provided taxi service for the women of the Leamy, the nearby residence for the aged.

At the start of the fifties Philadelphia had shifted into a period of rehabilitation. The Society Hill area was reborn as, one by one, shabby houses were transformed into showpieces of early-American charm. The Pennsylvania Railroad's ugly old Chinese Wall was replaced with the new and beautiful Penn Center complex, and a much-needed Municipal Services Building went up across from City Hall. The city was on the move and so was its population. In a round-robin fashion, center city dwellers moved to the outer areas, people in the outer areas headed for the suburbs, and some suburbanites migrated back to the newly fashionable sections of center city.

Parish life at this time was relatively unchanged. Curate John Hardwick replaced John Irwin in 1953. Much of this young man's ministry was directed toward the youth of the parish, and at a 1955 Vestry meeting he was complimented by Dr. Eder on a series of lectures on marriage he had given the young people. April of that year was a bad month, for Hurricane Hazel damaged the roof and it was discovered that the choir room was under attack by termites. But things improved in May with a donation of electronic chimes, the gift of Tinius Olsen. The Men's Club continued with their popular smokers and interesting speakers, including such luminaries as Harry Stuhldreher of football fame speaking on the U.S. Steel and Fairless Works, Drexel University's Dr. Ulysses Estilow on atoms, and Steve Sebo with moving pictures of University of Pennsylvania football.

The shifting population and the post-war baby boom combined to bring about a new organization in the church. Many families with mortgage aid provided by the GI Bill could now afford houses in the suburbs, but chose to retain their church ties. Now children had to be chauffeured to the 9:30





*Charles Eder, and parishioners leaving the church service.  
From a brochure prepared for a stewardship campaign.*



Sunday School service, and parents found themselves at loose ends during this time period. What started as a kitchen coffee klatch evolved into the Adult Discussion Group. Dot Putney remembers visiting a friend in Easton whose church met a similar need by starting a Bible study group. At Grace Church the Seabury adult series provided the basis for the curriculum, with a different discussion leader each week. Eventually a much-needed family church service was started, but as Don Putney said, "We lost something when that group ended. I couldn't wait to get down there on Sunday mornings. It was super."

In 1956 James Trimble replaced John Hardwick as curate. In 1957 Bishop Oliver Hart requested his early release, having other plans for him. The Vestry replied they couldn't possibly do without the popular young man in the middle of the year and turned down the request, bishop or not. The Reverend Mr. Trimble eventually became Rector of old Christ Church in Philadelphia. In an 1987 interview with Don Putney he made this comment on his years at Grace Church: "I always found the people to be very kind to their curates, very receptive about who they were and what they were trying to do." At the end of his tenure he was replaced by William Bosbysheill. Mildred Ninos recalls: "I can still see him standing in the front of the church with a big sign with his name on it, and he very carefully pointed to each syllable and pronounced it so we would get it right."

Through many of his years at Grace Church Dr. Eder had as his helpmate his fine wife Wilhelmina. With a twinkle in her eye and a merry sense of humor she was the perfect compliment to her dignified, patrician husband. Alfred Hirshberger, friend of young Craig Eder, described her as motherly, and the atmosphere at the rectory as homey. She accompanied the Rector on many of his calls, graciously received parishioners into her home, and gamely adapted vacation plans to the needs of the parish. She died of cancer in 1955. Stanley Thornton in a letter appealing for funds for memorial stained glass windows said, "Mrs. Eder was so constituted that she endeared herself to all the people of the parish." The letters accompanying the donations would seem to bear this out. One parishioner wrote, "I am pleased to have the privilege of contributing to a memorial for Mrs. Eder whom I loved very dearly." And another, "We always held her in the highest esteem and knew she always stood for the best of Grace Church, Mt. Airy."

As the decade of the fifties neared its close so did Dr. Eder's ministry at the church. Later in 1960 at the time of his death there was a Vestry testimonial, a part of which follows. "With complete disregard of material wealth and shunning personal glory and recognition, he ministered well to his people, quietly and directly." Here are some comments by members of the Eder era. Jack Clapham: "He had an interesting way of presenting a sermon. He always brought it down to the listener's level so that you could understand." Virginia Subers: "Mr. Eder was a wonderful and loving person. He was a great influence in my life for the good." Naomi Caldwell Fleming: "I can see him in the cold weather striding across from the rectory with his black cape on. It would be flying behind him; he made quite an impressive appearance." John Thomas said it all: "He was a very fine man and a fine minister."



His last Vestry meeting in the spring of 1959 was exactly like his first, the orderly transaction of the business of the church.

### **The Reverend Richard K. Bauder**

A letter written March 12, 1959, on the letterhead of Emmanuel Episcopal Church of Quakertown included this paragraph, "In giving my consent to my election as Rector of Grace Church, I do so with humble awareness of the greater responsibility to which you have called me in the service of our Lord, and with a deep sense of gratitude for the confidence you have shown in me by your action."

Richard Bauder had been Rector of Emmanuel for five years, leading the parish from mission status to self-supporting church. Born in Hellertown, Pennsylvania, he was educated at Franklin and Marshall College and the Philadelphia Divinity School. At the March Vestry meeting he was unanimously elected Rector of Grace Church. The tall, good-looking young man, together with his pretty wife, Claire, and small sons, Rick and Bruce, arrived in Mt. Airy in time for the Rector to assume his new post on May 6. The service for institution of a rector was held September 22, 1959. His first Vestry meeting was in May.

When Charles Eder took over from Thomas Cline many years before, the tone of the Vestry meetings was unaltered, not a beat was missed. But with Richard Bauder came youth, vigor, and a new approach. Change was the result. For starters, Grace Church ads were placed in the local newspapers, and a church sign was erected at Stenton and Gowen Avenues. Next was a request for a five-year plan to improve the landscaping. Then came the reinstatement of the Parish Planning Committee. Shortly after the Rector's arrival, the Vestry decided to purchase the Apeldorn property on Sprague Street, thereby ending seventy years of an on-campus rectory. Later that year a tract rack was built on the North Porch. The Rector obtained postal permits which meant a considerable saving for the church. George Sudlow was given permission to order red acolyte cassocks for use on high feast days, a festive change from the traditional black.

As 1959 neared its end, The Reverend Douglas Spence was hired to assist the Rector. Speaking of his early days at the church, Doug Spence recalled, "One of my first duties was to put together the parish register. Some of the old records were in very poor shape. Also, I was put in charge of the YPF. I remember meeting with them on Sunday nights and having a great time with a wonderful bunch of young people. I was also in charge of the Church School."

The process of amending the church charter was started in March 1960. The changes were intended to update the document and bring it into line with diocesan guidelines, and to make some much-needed adjustments in the operation of Grace Church. The By-Laws were changed accordingly. One break with tradition was to move the annual meeting from late afternoon on



Easter Monday to the first Sunday in February. From that day on attendance was much better. The second big change concerned the term of office of a vestryman; once his four-year term was up, he could not be reelected until one year had passed. Guy Apeldorn, speaking of earlier times, wrote, "The Vestry seem to have been elected in perpetuity. The same people were on for years." The new system guaranteed an infusion of new blood every year.

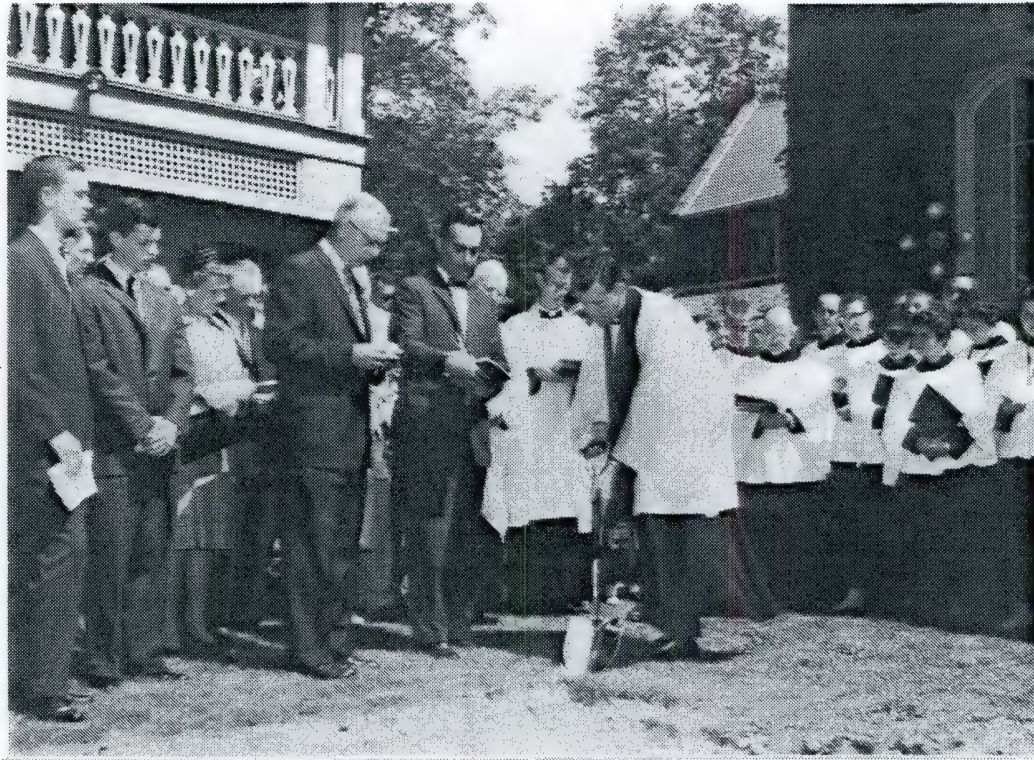
That wasn't the end of progress as plans finally got under way for the long-awaited parish house enlargement. A professional fundraiser was hired and a massive campaign launched under the chairmanship of Richard Brehm. The committee was comprised of four divisions, each having four teams of five persons each. This organization was balanced by an equal number of hostess divisions, also with twenty members each. In addition, there were publicity and special gift committees. Once again, as in 1888, the women of the church



*A committee of women in the Green Room, 1962*

were invited to share in the plans for the the building—this time as members of the kitchen subcommittee. In preparation for the groundbreaking ceremony on May 27, 1962, shubbery was removed by a local nurseryman and furniture stashed wherever room could be found. The four pianos and the kitchen range were commercially stored, and the women packed away the dishes. In the middle of all this, in December 1961, Claire Bauder gave birth to the rectory's third son Todd.





*Richard Bauder breaks ground for the new parish house, 1962*

What could well have been a time of disruption and discontent for a parish enduring construction turned out to be anything but. Everyone gamely and creatively carried on activities around their fractured parish house. Church school classes were held in several locations---the kindergarten in the old rectory, the primary department in the Gilmore's house across Ardleigh Street, and all other classes in the church after the 9:15 service (never mind the occasional crayon found in a pew at the 11 o'clock service). Meetings of all kinds were held in parishioners' homes. In October 1962 the Rector initiated the talent project. Participating members were given a dollar each as seed money. Using their skills and talents, they parlayed this into a much larger amount. It was a successful fund raiser. Also introduced in 1962 was the Church Extension Committee whose members deliver altar flowers to the sick and shut-ins after Sunday services.

The postwar years of the fifties had been a time of calm and a return to normalcy. Church attendance in the country in general had increased, and the Episcopal Church enjoyed a particularly large growth spurt when new churches were built in the burgeoning suburbs. They needed only to open their doors to be filled to overflowing. Grace Church shared in this abundance, and the



momentum continued through most of the sixties. So it was with great joy and relief that the service of dedication for the renovated parish house was held on May 26, 1963, Bishop Oliver J. Hart officiating, following by just three weeks a service for the laying of the cornerstone with Bishop Gillespie Armstrong officiating. Gone were the Green, Brown, and Choir Rooms of yore, replaced by a spacious all-purpose auditorium. Beyond that, skillfully incorporating the old rectory, came a wing of classrooms and offices named Eder Hall after the late Rector. It was at this time that Richard Bauder rightly called Grace Church "a growing church full of vitality and dedicated Christian purpose."



*The Kindergarten Class in their new classroom in Eder Hall*

In the spring of 1963 Douglas Spence finished his four years as assistant. With a love for archaeology he had spent time in the Middle East studying Biblical sites. These scholarly pursuits gave an added dimension to his ministry at Grace Church. Modest, gentle, he and his wife Diana were beloved by all. After his departure the Reverend Raymond Cole became Curate.

By 1964, with splendid new facilities and a staff of thirty, the church school was thriving. The three women's groups were as busy as ever with their various projects, and the Men's Club continued to provide "good entertainment, refreshments and fellowship" at their meetings. With three well-attended services at the church every Sunday morning the job of the ushers was put to the test. Don Putney decided the time had come to organize this



group into a structured guild and to update the manual. To most people the duties of the ushers would seem to be simply handing out leaflets and greeting churchgoers on their arrival. When the manual was finished, it was a good eight pages long, full of diagrams, emergency procedures, and a general outline of duties. The comfort and well-being of the congregation was and is overseen by these caretakers at the rear of the church.

It was at this time in the black neighborhoods of North Philadelphia that years of pent-up anger and frustration erupted into destructive and devastating riots. The leadership of the Diocese, spearheaded by Bishop Robert DeWitt, felt the time had come for the clergy to step down from the pulpit and into the arena of social action. The "whites only" policy at Girard College, as mandated by the will of Stephen Girard, was challenged, and Episcopal clergy were in the forefront. Grace Church did not become as involved as many other Episcopal churches did. However, Curate Ray Cole had been an intern at the Church of the Advocate, which was in the heart of the strife-filled area. He had achieved a degree of sensitivity and understanding of the existing problems which he shared with the congregation in his sermons.

The young Curate had other skills. He worked effectively with the youth of the parish. His theatrical talents were a tremendous asset to the YPF Follies. These productions featured a marvelous array of musical numbers performed not only by the young people, but by the women's and men's groups as well. One result was that the Parish discovered that Claire Bauder, much loved for her warm and generous contributions to Parish life, also possessed a magnificent soprano voice.

By this time Newell Robinson had of necessity begun admitting a few girls to the choir to form an alto section in his choir of men and boys, but adult women were not welcome. A few years later Carol Faris broke the age-gender barrier to join the depleted alto section. She was told at the time that her membership was temporary, but she was to stay on for ten years. Then Claire Bauder became the first adult soprano in the choir, and the whole congregation reveled in the beauty of her voice.

In the summer of 1963 Roderick and Frances Ragland visited Grace Church, and that December they and their young daughters, Karen and Nina, became the first black family to join. Frances has this comment: "Everyone was very cordial, and several families were particularly friendly to us. The Rector and the Curate called on us and made us feel welcome. That's why we joined." They were followed by more black families who quickly became involved in all aspects of parish life. New friendships were formed, and it became apparent that there was positive value in having a racially mixed parish.

In 1964 it was decided that the building fund would have to be extended another three years in order to reach its goal. In May the Vestry room was dedicated to the memory of Albert Brand. In November Timothy Bauder was born, completing the quartet of Bauder male offspring and assuring a supply of choir boys and acolytes for many years to come. *Why the Chimes Rang*



was the colorful Christmas pageant production under the direction of Betsy Abell, with a cast ranging from the youngest church school children to some of the most venerable members of the parish. In 1966 space in the basement was rented to a Montesorri school, an arrangement that lasted until 1969.

Curate Michael Hoffacker was welcomed in February of 1968. He, too, worked with the YPF, with whom he became very popular. He was also to become a favorite of the Thursday women's group who, in motherly fashion, brought him sandwiches so he could join in their post-Communion-Service luncheons. In May of 1968 Newell Robinson took an eleven-week sabbatical, a well-deserved respite coinciding with his retirement from the Philadelphia Divinity School after twenty-seven years. He was awarded a Doctor of Divinity degree at the school's 1968 commencement. Also in the the Spring of 1968, the parish house auditorium was named for former-Rector Thomas Cline who had died that year.

*The burning of  
parish house mortgage  
on the stage of Cline  
Auditorium, 1969*



Vestryman David Abell formed a committee to bring speakers to the church on Sunday mornings after the family service. The purpose was to "challenge



young adults in areas which represent current thinking on the mission of the church to the community." The idealistic young members proposed bringing some of the more controversial social activists of the day, but the Vestry cautioned restraint. The resulting toned-down series included such people as Oliver Lancaster of the Philadelphia School District speaking on the plight of inner-city black children and Rabbi Elias Charry from the Germantown Jewish Center. Attendance was good and the programs well received.

It was a happy day in May of 1969 when the congregation reassembled in Cline Auditorium after church for the burning of the mortgage secured to enlarge the parish house and construct Eder Hall. Vestryman Henry Schimpf, acting as master of ceremonies, admitted he never thought that so much money (over \$200,000.00) could be raised in eight years. At his side was a beaming Richard Bauder who had said all along that it could. As the match was set to the obsolete document, Newell Robinson spontaneously burst forth with the Doxology and everyone joined in. The parish had survived the turbulence of the sixties still very much intact, but the tide was about to turn.

1970 started off mildly enough. The needs of the hearing impaired were addressed by the installation of an amplifying system. The February annual meeting was typical of others in the recent past with the various reports. There was the usual Vestry election, but the results of the voting were not typical. The tradition of more than a century was shattered by the election of the first woman, Anne Snyder. At the Vestry meeting later that month the men were most welcoming and cordial. However, for the only time in the recorded history of the church the breakdown of the vote was questioned. It was decided that the tally was privileged information to be known only by the tellers and the Rector, and the results stood (and so did the walls).

In May the Rev. and Mrs. Roger Pickering were granted space on the second floor over the parish office for All Souls' Church, the mission to the deaf. In June Curate Michael Hoffacker moved on to be replaced by ex-lawyer, the Rev. Ralph Rogers. A man in his middle years, his diverse background brought a new dimension to the Grace Church ministry. One of the many who appreciated his sermons was Irene Williams. "He always carefully explained everything as he went along, sort of annotated his sermons. He was as much teacher as preacher."

In March of 1971, the Rector initiated a committee to reorganize the various women's groups into one overall organization composed of separate guilds. St. Elizabeth's (the women who met after the midweek Holy Communion service), St. Anne's (the once-a-month evening group), St. Margaret's (the women who met every Wednesday to work on craft projects for the bazaar), St. Mary's (constructing toys and dolls for the bazaar), and St. Martha's (the group for the hospitality function such as the monthly coffee hours). The Rector's rationale was that a united whole is greater than the sum of its parts. A slate of officers was elected and, together with representatives of each of the guilds, had regular board meetings.



By the March Vestry meeting it had become painfully apparent that church attendance was declining, not just at Grace Church but nationwide. The legacy of the sixties had taken root. For one thing, the Church was certainly a part of the establishment so vociferously challenged by the young. Another factor was the return of so many women to the workplace, leaving less time on weekends than before; since the Blue Laws had been abolished, Sunday was now a day when one could shop. And the population of school-age children was dropping dramatically. These and other reasons combined to cause considerable erosion of church membership.

In response to the failing health of the parish, Don Putney launched a comprehensive planning program in April 1971. Based on the premise that the church was "richly endowed with a great heritage, capable rector, talented volunteers, and an excellent physical plant," the purpose was to develop a roadmap for the future.

In April 1972, a commemorative concert and reception was held to honor Newell Robinson for his fifty years of service to the church. A gala occasion orchestrated by vestryman Harry Taylor, it featured works both composed and played by Dr. Robinson, assisted by the Grace Church choir and a small string orchestra. There were more than five hundred in attendance, many of them former choir members returning to pay tribute.

This was also the year the By-Laws were amended to lower the voting age to eighteen. The great division of the organ was removed for servicing thereby revealing a squirrel entranceway. The chapel was refurbished with vibrant blue hangings trimmed with gold, designed and executed by Diana Blay. In September Jack Clapham and Edward Doelp became the first Grace Church lay readers licensed to administer the chalice.

A noteworthy event of 1973 was the appointment of Nicholas Ninos as bazaar chairman. The leadership of this yearly fund raiser had rotated between the various church organizations, but Nick was to have the dubious honor of holding office from that time forward. A year or two before, his wife Mildred had agreed to be treasurer of the bazaar, and with the exception of one year has done so ever after. "It's not as easy being treasurer as one would think. Many's the time I spent hours at the church after the bazaar was over." This always successful event was the result of many weeks of work by many people, culminating in a tiring but happy day.

In 1974 work on the needlepoint kneelers was started, another venture of the multi-talented Diana Blay. "This was a happy project. There were days when turn any corner at church and someone was working on a kneeler," wrote Diana. In the May 1974 *Parish News* there was a report about the new kitchen curtains, a typical example of Grace Church teamwork: Marguerite Kingeter and Did Lilley picked out the fabric, Diana Blay chose the style, Did sewed them, and Geoff Tattersfield had them fireproofed. The Men's Club was experiencing a decline at this time, but the YPF had a waiting list. The May Follies publicity boasted "a star-studded cast, spine-tingling drama, breath-taking singing and dancing, and side-splitting comedy."





*A scene from the YPF Follies. Curate Ray Cole  
and his wife Keena in the back row.*

In 1976 the Episcopal Church introduced its new prayer book. The revisions were done to update the liturgy into contemporary, more understandable language and to rearrange the structure of services to conform with recent liturgical scholarship. There was a predictable outcry by those who mourned the passing of certain beautiful, poetic phrases, and by others for whom the change alone was unsettling. The new book was introduced at Grace Church in 1977 at the Thursday communion services to mixed reviews. In the Fall the Rector led an enlightening series of workshops with line-by-line explanations in an attempt to promote understanding and acceptance. His efforts did much to ease the transition.



The highlight of 1978 was the dinner honoring Richard Bauder on the twenty-fifth anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood. Rector's Warden Earl Williams, reporting on this joyful occasion, said "It was a highly successful effort involving all segments of the parish." The Church School, though reduced in numbers, was still very active. For example, Christmas cards were made for Meals-on-Wheels, ornaments for the church Christmas tree; there was a covered dish supper and church decorating party. The latter was another innovation introduced by Richard Bauder with all parishioners invited to share in this yearly event. The Church School also upheld two other traditions at Grace Church; at Thanksgiving jams, jellies, and apples were collected for people at All Saints Hospital (formerly for the House of Rest), and gifts were brought to the manger at Christmas for St. John's Settlement in Philadelphia. The Men's Club was helping with maintenance and sextons' duties at this time, and the YPF pitched in by raking leaves in the Fall. A healing prayer group was instituted also. The seventies ended with a diminished but perhaps more closely knit parish determined to survive.

Mercer Tate in his *Mission on the Hill, the History of Summit Presbyterian Church* had this to say about Mt. Airy at the start of the eighties: "Economic, racial and sociological stability prevailed. It is doubtful that there was, anywhere in the United States, an economically comfortable community which was as diverse as Mt. Airy religiously, racially and ethnically." Grace Church reflected the prevailing conditions and parish life went on. By January of 1980, the vestry room had been transformed from formal conference room to cheerful, comfortable chamber by Claire Bauder and Diana Blay. In May the women added a luncheon to their popular annual card party. Newell Robinson resigned on September 22, ending an unbelievable fifty-eight years as organist/choirmaster, never missing a scheduled service in all that time, save for his August vacation. Wrote the Rector in his annual report for that year, "I miss him at every eight a.m. Eucharist in that front pew, and I will always love Fess for being there---under the best and worst of weather and regardless of his physical condition." He died in 1984.

In 1982 the women opened a thrift shop in the basement Memorial Room, an alternative to their regular rummage sales, and a lucrative one. That Spring there was some vandalism to stained glass windows. In addition to the necessary repairs, the windows were releaded, caulked, sealed, and covered with the protective plexiglass, Lexan. The Rector decided that what was good for two windows would be good for all of them, a costly but prudent project. Once again he was told that it couldn't be done, and once again he proved that indeed it could. By 1986 the last of the windows was completed and dedicated, and the parish could breathe a little easier with their priceless stained glass protected.

In 1984 Carol Faris became organist and choirmaster, replacing Linda Kershaw. A service for the installation of acolytes was held in April 1985. Said the *Parish News*, "There is a group of young men in Grace Church who are contributing in a very special way to the worship of God, serving quietly, reliably, and expertly." Through the years dozens of young men had been so



involved, but perhaps the ultimate had been achieved by Clinton Williams and Winrow Henderson when serving together. Just prior to the service they would approach the altar in perfect cadence, bow in unison, separate to light the candles, each a mirror image of the other, a virtuoso performance. 1985 saw the beginning of another chapter of the Girls Friendly Society, reinstituted after many years. And the choir proved they could bake as well as sing and raised enough money to buy their splendid new blue vestments.

An unsung group faithfully serving the church since its inception is the Altar Guild. Every Saturday morning teams of two, three, or four meet in the sacristy to ready everything for the next day's services. They polish silver, clean cruets, count wafers, dress the chalice, in addition to innumerable other tasks all contributing to the proper execution of the worship services. Always a female organization, these women have performed an invaluable, essential, behind-the-scenes, function.

In May of 1986, Marjorie Farmer gave impetus to the church history project by staging interviews between church school students and some of the church's members of long standing, a mutually edifying experience. Later in the year the Vestry apprised the congregation of the serious deterioration of the building despite the constant vigilance of the Property Committee. In the spring of 1987, they applied for and received a grant from the Philadelphia Historical Preservation Corporation. The money was used to employ the John Milner architectural firm to conduct an in-depth architectural and engineering study of the church. Once again responding to a serious situation, Don Putney started the Historic Preservation project, the purpose to raise funds for the physical plant.

On April 7, 1987, Colonel Lawrence G. Horn, 79th Army Reserve Command, Headquarters Chaplain, was a guest at the ten o'clock service. After preaching the sermon, he asked the Rector and his wife to join him at the chancel steps where he read a letter of commendation from the Commanding General of the First United States Army, Fort Meade, Maryland. This letter was a prelude to the awarding of the prestigious Legion of Merit Medal the following evening, at a banquet honoring Colonel Bauder on the occasion of his retirement from the military. During all of his years at Grace Church, he had maintained a parallel career in the Army Reserve. Colonel Horn pointed out that just as Claire Bauder had graciously and ably aided him in his ministry, so also had she been a part of his chaplaincy.

In the fall of 1987, Rosemary Colson replaced Carol Faris as organist and choirmaster. Earlier in the year, vestryman John Allison, at the behest of the Rector, had started the Evangelism and Renewal Committee. By Fall these members had become so eager they felt meetings should be once a week. According to chairman Allison, the purpose of the committee was outreach. First, by increasing membership in Grace Church and second, by increasing the level of involvement by those who are already members.

The Vestry had a series of sessions with the Reverend Frank Turner of the bishop's staff wherein they took a critical look at the parish and worked hard on a mission statement.



In January of 1988, the Vestry signed the paper endorsing the Reverend Marjorie Farmer for ordination to the priesthood. This process had been repeated many times over the years for curates and other candidates, but never before for a woman. The very accomplished Marjorie had had a successful career both teaching English and coordinating the English program in the Philadelphia School District. Having joined Grace Church in the sixties, she shared her considerable skills with the church--the women's groups, choir, Church School, the Altar Guild, Vestry, and in 1987 both lay reader and intern deacon.

On May 9, 1988, in the presence of more than three hundred family members and friends, Marjorie Farmer was ordained a priest of the church. The Right Reverend Allen Bartlett, Bishop of the Diocese of Pennsylvania, officiated. A glorious procession of acolytes, choir, and numerous white-robed clergy preceded the ages-old service. "Let your faithful people sing with joy," was a phrase from the Psalm read that evening, and sing they did. Commented the head usher, Charles Rivers, "It was wonderful to hear those



*Rehearsing for the Advent service of lessons and carols, 1987*



loud responses and singing. You could even hear it outside the church." It was a reverent, proud, and joyous occasion for the people of Grace Church.

As 1988 continues, the parish is effectively addressing the past, present, and future. The past in planning for a year-long celebration of the church's hundred years at the Gowen Avenue location. The present by the number of viable organizations, clergy, and staff carrying forward the day-to-day work of the parish. The future in planning for the preservation of the building, in the serious concern for the mission of the church, and in vigorously pursuing evangelism and parish renewal. Perhaps the church of today can best be summed up by a quote from Louise Ritenour speaking of her years as a member in the forties:

"There was an atmosphere in Grace Church that I have never encountered anywhere else. It was compounded of reverence, friendliness, compassion, and tolerance, with a generous portion of recognition of the joy of living, and underlying it all the constant presence of Jesus Christ, illuminating all the church's endeavors. I hope it is still there."

It is.

As we embark on the next chapter of our history, we pray that God will bless and guide us in our unfolding mission and that the work of the Church will flourish.



THE VESTRY OF GRACE CHURCH, MT. AIRY  
In Chronological Order

- |                         |                          |                             |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Charles Carstairs    | 32. D. Lansdale          | 63. William Thorne          |
| 2. Henry Berry          | 33. M. Bayard            | 64. Robert Bright           |
| 3. Thomas H. Powers     | 34. Admiral Breeze       | 65. A. L. E. Crouter        |
| 4. A. S. Robinson       | 35. T. B. Gowen          | 66. Charles W. Landenberger |
| 5. Eli Burrhouse        | 36. Daniel Holmes        | 67. S. Mendelson Meehan     |
| 6. S. L. Creutzborg     | 37. M. Lansdale          | 68. Ralph North             |
| 7. W. E. Stone          | 38. J. R. Schellenberger | 69. Frederick Dunn          |
| 8. P. E. Hamm           | 39. Richard Jackson      | 70. William F. Fell         |
| 9. Clement Tingley, Jr. | 40. William Jamieson     | 71. Thomas H. Ball          |
| 10. Beekman Potter      | 41. John Waterhouse      | 72. George J. Lincoln       |
| 11. R. H. Smith         | 42. George Stroud        | 73. William Clivisman       |
| 12. A. Miskey           | 43. Joseph Lewis         | 74. Frederick T. McGuire    |
| 13. Nathan Birchell     | 44. Charles Spencer      | 75. Horace Fortescue        |
| 14. J. Yocum, Jr.       | 45. Charles LeBoutilllin | 76. Pratt Thompson          |
| 15. G. W. Merchant      | 46. Edward Lansdale      | 77. Edward J. Webb          |
| 16. C. Taylor           | 47. John Savage          | 78. Harry Brown             |
| 17. Myler Elkins        | 48. William Dunlap       | 79. Thomas Alsop            |
| 18. J. B. Baker         | 49. A. T. Schurch        | 80. Holman White            |
| 19. S. Harvey Thomas    | 50. George Woodruff      | 81. Walter Sibson           |
| 20. Henry Holmes        | 51. William Averill      | 82. William Wagner          |
| 21. Charles M. Bayard   | 52. Charles Robson       | 83. John E. Greaves         |
| 22. Charles Dulith      | 53. I. H. Dunn           | 84. Stanley Thornton        |
| 23. John Rush           | 54. William Hand         | 85. Albert Brand            |
| 24. Sarne               | 55. W. B. Marshall       | 86. Robert Farnham          |
| 25. J. H. Dunn          | 56. Charles Turnbull     | 87. Dorwarth                |
| 26. D. Williams         | 57. Charles Birney       | 88. Frederick Burness       |
| 27. Unruh               | 58. Arthur Scott         | 89. Henry Gideon            |
| 28. C. H. Miller        | 59. John Hood            | 90. Frank Brady             |
| 29. A. G. Larue         | 60. Francis I. Gowen     | 91. Edgar Hunter            |
| 30. James Lamb          | 61. Edward Corwell       | 92. Ernest Jones            |
| 31. Franklin B. Gowen   | 62. Henry Butler         | 93. Charles Voorhis         |



- |                            |                           |                         |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 94. Richard Brehm          | 119. Nicholas Ninos       | 144. Suzanne Hagen      |
| 95. William Walton         | 120. Russell Schaeffer    | 145. Leslie Harris      |
| 96. Roy Hand               | 121. David Abell          | 146. Roland Hopson      |
| 97. Charles Robbins        | 122. Forest Clark         | 147. Robert Kilgore     |
| 98. Edward Thomas          | 123. Theodore Clattenburg | 148. David Wagner       |
| 99. Edward Doelp           | 124. Robert Hewitt        | 149. Milton Adams       |
| 100. Garfield Duncan       | 125. John Leigh           | 150. Lydia Eagleson     |
| 101. John Clapham          | 126. Richard Lilley       | 151. William Dobos      |
| 102. Guy Apeldorn          | 127. Anne Snyder          | 152. Russell Kaller     |
| 103. Benjamin Gotwals      | 128. Harry Taylor         | 153. Ralph Sealy        |
| 104. Sidney Hampson        | 129. Roderick Ragland     | 154. Edwin Labelle      |
| 105. W. Willis Gilmore     | 130. George Bowen         | 155. John H. Clark      |
| 106. Henry Schimpf         | 131. Mildred Ninos        | 156. Sarah Mary Hampson |
| 107. Geoffrey Tattersfield | 132. Carol Faris          | 157. Ruth Taylor        |
| 108. Conrad Bond           | 133. Richard Furman       | 158. Karen McNeal       |
| 109. William Wilkinson     | 134. Earl C. William      | 159. Ernest Cower       |
| 110. Ralph Affleck         | 135. Alexander Kerr       | 160. Gloria Thompson    |
| 111. Norman Baumm          | 136. Winrow Henderson     | 161. Charles Rivers     |
| 112. William Hackenberg    | 137. Marjorie Farmer      | 162. Mary Weber         |
| 113. Donald Putney         | 138. Louis Reddy          | 163. John Allison       |
| 114. Alfred Hirshberger    | 139. Marshall Truitt      | 164. Arthur Roper       |
| 115. Anthony Chicone       | 140. Gloria Lundberg      | 165. Susan Snyder       |
| 116. Charles Elliott       | 141. Lawrence Noble       | 166. Brittain Brewer    |
| 117. Howard Foulkrod       | 142. George Rockett       |                         |
| 118. William Mead          | 143. Walter Johnson       |                         |